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WHITES IN SERVITUDE

South Africa: A Report and a Solution

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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RUMORS OF INFERIORITY

Barriers to black success in America

by Jeff Howard & Ray Hammond

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CORRESPONDENCE

SEX SURVEY

To the editors:

In his survey of writings on the history of sexuality ("Sex in the West," July 8), Lawrence Stone pays particular emphasis to the stunning shift in the 16th century from a relative liberalism that included licensed prostitution and bathhouses for both sexes to a diametrically opposed sexual austerity. He also notes the analogous, if less dramatic, shift from laxity to rigor around the turn of the 18th century. As he rightly notes, "bureaucratic formalism and crusading or reforming zeal hardly seem adequate to explain so major a transformation."

A very significant mass motivating factor not mentioned by Stone nor, apparently, in the works under review, did exist in both cases, namely disease and the fear of disease. Syphilis, whatever its origins, rose from insignificance to epidemic proportions from 1520-50 and was seen by many as evidence of God's wrath and punishment. Though the new rigorism of religious and political reformers no doubt had other roots, the uncontrollable horror of the new disease enormously increased the influence of their agitation.

The same applies to the 19th century. One need not have read more than a few contemporary sources to understand the terror and risk associated with sexuality in an age that, while politically sophisticated, was helpless in the face of this most feared of all venereal diseases.

Conversely, there is no doubt that the decline of the fear, and also of the mystery, of sexuality in the 20th century had at least as much to do with medical progress as with the theories of Freud and his epigones. Most recently, as Professor Stone points out, the combination of new venereal diseases and the bipartisan moralism of feminists and Moral Majoritarians may bring about yet another transformation. It would be interesting to see the historical and sociological insights of the authors he reviews applied to the present predicament.

DAVID GRESS
Stanford, California

To the editors:

For someone who has studied every book there is on the history of sex, Lawrence Stone doesn't have his facts very straight. After asserting that in Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. "the acceptance of bisexuality [was] the norm," he goes on to say: "By the late fourth century [homosexuality] seems to have been in full decay. By the time Aristophanes was writing, the society he depicted was basically heterosexual, and the homosexual aspects of it were pushed more and more into the background."

Aristophanes wrote his greatest masterpieces in the *fifth* century B.C., toward the end of Athens's golden age, not the late fourth century. Perhaps Mr. Stone has forgotten that years in the centuries B.C. run backward; thus Aristophanes's death in 388 B.C. was *early* in the fourth century, not late.

In any case, if the society that Aristophanes depicted was "basically heterosexual," then Mr. Stone has inadvertently disproved the fashionable theory, which he embraces, of widespread homosexuality in fifth-century Athens.

LAWRENCE AUSTER
New York, New York

COLOR-BLIND CANT

To the editors:

Jeremy Rabkin, the anti-affirmative action battalion's favorite polemicist ("Reagan's Secret Quotas," August 5), lays claim to a great new discovery: the Reagan administration believes in affirmative action. Actually, I never had much doubt about that. Sandra Day O'Connor wasn't appointed to the Supreme Court because she is the best conservative lawyer the administration could find, but because she is a woman. Clarence Pendleton wasn't appointed chairman of the Civil Rights Commission for any discernible qualification except that he is black. One could go on, of course, but why waste the space?

As far as I know, Mr. Rabkin does not oppose token affirmative action like the O'Connor and Pendleton appointments, but only bona fide programs in employment, academia, etc., that assert the purpose of affirmative action. His major lament seems to be that "one still has to

continued on page 40

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2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... On the history of sex, the fate of a Czech, &c.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... FED UP
In defense of the Federal Reserve Board.

5 **THE EDITORS** ..... THE PARTITION SOLUTION
Apartheid is an abomination, but if one big pluralist democracy is the only solution in South Africa, that means there's no solution.

NOTEBOOK

7 **NOEL JOHNSON** ..... POSTCARD MOSCOW: AT THE MOVIES

8 **MICHAEL HIRSCHORN** ..... EGGHEADS STRIKE OUT
Intellectuals and baseball.

10 **ROSEMARIE ZAGARRI** ..... FOUNDING INTENTIONS
What would Jefferson and Madison have said about prayer in public schools?

11 **BENJAMIN POGRUND** ..... FALLING APARTHEID
The Pretoria government has lost its monopoly on violence.

12 **JAMES NORTH** ..... DEATH OF A DAILY
Another light goes out in South Africa.

14 **ROBERT KUTTNER** ..... LOOPHOLE LOGIC
A case study in phony arguments against tax reform.

17 **JEFF HOWARD & RAY HAMMOND** ..... RUMORS OF INFERIORITY
Too many blacks avoid intellectual competition because they've internalized society's suspicions about their intelligence. How to break the vicious cycle of fear and failure.

22 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: PASSIONS AND ADVENTURES
Slow *Dance with a Stranger*; animated Mark Twain.

24 **C. VANN WOODWARD** ..... SERVANTS AND SLAVES
Bound Over by John van der Zee

26 **BARBARA PROBST SOLOMON** ... INDOCHINA MON AMOUR
The Lover by Marguerite Duras

32 **GLENN C. LOURY** ..... A CRISIS GROWS IN BROOKLYN
Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism by Jonathan Rieder

35 **STANISLAW BARANCZAK** ..... THE POWER OF TASTE
Report from the Besieged City by Zbigniew Herbert
Barbarian in the Garden by Zbigniew Herbert

37 **WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD** ..... THE SCHOLAR AND THE SOAP
A professor's strange path to TV stardom.

38 **ALAN SHAPIRO** ..... POEM *Astronomy Lesson*

42 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... QUALMS

COVER by Pat Taylor for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 17.

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FROM WASHINGTON

FED UP

One man is more responsible than any other for the political success of the Reagan presidency, and his name isn't Ronald Reagan. It's Paul Volcker, the man Jimmy Carter appointed as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. People already have forgotten the enervating effect of 14 percent inflation on both the economy and the national spirit, and how hopeless it seemed that anything could be done to stop it. Abroad, no one wanted our sickly dollars. A (relatively) stable currency has been the basis not just for the economic boom of recent years, but also in large part for the renewed national sense that we are a people in control of our destiny.

And Volcker did it. In October 1979 he persuaded his colleagues to starve inflation of the dollars it feeds on, whatever the effect on interest rates. With enormous pain, and despite a few relapses, the therapy worked. President Reagan did little to help. In fact, his deficits worked against Volcker's efforts. Meanwhile, sniping from the White House at crucial moments made his lonely task more difficult.

The Reaganites want credit for ending inflation, but they don't want blame for the recession that accomplished this. They want praise for two years of robust growth, but they deny responsibility for the deficits that helped to stimulate it. The clown prince of supply-side economics, Arthur Laffer, asserted in a ludicrous *Washington Post* column on August 20 that inflation was conquered by increases in the supply of goods, rather than by decreases in the supply of money. Even assuming (absurdly) that all recent growth has been caused by lower marginal tax rates, the math is impossible. Growth has averaged barely 2.5 percent during the Reagan years, while inflation has dropped by more than triple that amount.

It's not clear how much longer the supply siders are going to be claiming credit for the state of the economy. A Congressional Budget Office report issued August 15, predicting a sickly 2.6 percent growth rate for 1985, already seems wildly optimistic. Growth was barely one percent through June, and every day brings another sign that the second-half rebound everyone's been waiting for is not going to materialize.

This puts Volcker's Fed in an awful bind. The most common measure of the money supply has been growing lately at an annual rate of almost 15 percent. Letting this continue raises the danger of renewed high inflation. But slowing monetary growth may push an already weak economy over the edge and into recession.

Discussions of monetary policy rapidly get theological. Among academics, no one doubts any longer Milton Friedman's general proposition that changes in the money supply have important effects on the real economy. The debate turns on subsidiary questions. Should the supply of money be set on automatic pilot, or should there be "fine-tuning"? What definition of "money" is most accurate in a turbulent financial world? In adjusting the spigot, is the best "target" the quantity of money itself, or the price of some commodity like gold, or the exchange rate of the dollar, or (currently most fashionable) the growth rate of nominal GNP? These are real questions. But they needn't distract lay people from two fundamental propositions.

One is that we haven't escaped the so-called "Phillips curve," which says there's a trade-off between inflation and recession. Policies aimed single-mindedly at expansion—such as gunning the money supply without restraint—will produce inflation, not healthy growth. Politicians and commentators who assert that this risk has disappeared are either fools or demagogues who would have us squander our enormously costly victory over currency erosion. We have managed lately to put off the day of reckoning through heavy borrowing from abroad, but this just leaves us less room to maneuver in the future. A weak economy already running $200 billion annual deficits can't allow itself the luxury of increased

continued on page 41

Fiscal crisis: a tool of urban reform.

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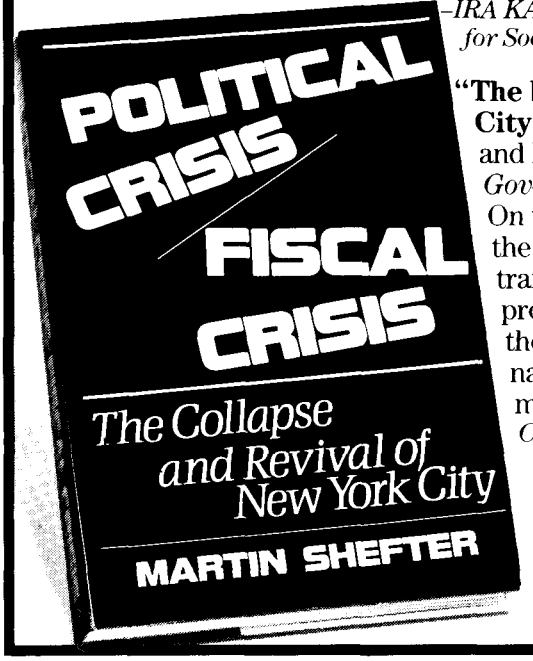

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
SEPTEMBER 9, 1985

THE PARTITION SOLUTION

Even those members of the Reagan administration who see themselves as constructively engaged with the South African government were palpably disappointed by President P.W. Botha's much awaited and, therefore, particularly anticlimactic address August 15. If these all-too-eager allies couldn't muster warm words for Botha's efforts, there are no such words to be mustered. In South Africa itself, moreover, even the commercial interests that have profited most routinely from apartheid interpreted Botha's speech as the grim end of a process rather than a hopeful beginning. *Business Day*, South Africa's *Wall Street Journal*, actually called for Botha's resignation. The cruel system of apartheid with its patently insincere pieties about "separate development" has become the ideological redoubt of only those whites whose lives pathetically depend on confirmation by law and custom that they are racially superior to blacks. Unfortunately, these people are not few, and they have the guns.

Future historians may find it convenient to date the point of no return in South Africa just about now. Even Bishop Tutu said he was "devastated" by Botha's speech. He said it put the country "on the brink of catastrophe." In fact, South Africa has been beyond the point of no return for years. The only questions left about the catastrophic stage is how bloody it will be, how long it will last, and what will come after. To be sure, there has been no weakening of the government's will to be brutal in defending the status quo. The various black oppositions, meanwhile, have demonstrated an impressive ability to wage their struggle using economic weapons and symbolic protests. There has not yet been much mass terrorism by blacks—a testament to the Christian spirit that infuses much of the anti-apartheid movement within South Africa—but it cannot be far away.

Still, what is occurring right now on the main South African stage is a play for international public opinion. The ruling whites have no hope of winning the moral approbation of the West. What they seek is the West's indifference and, as a result, the continuation of business-as-usual. The insurgent black leaders certainly aspire to bring South African society to a grinding halt, but they rightly doubt their own present ability to make that happen. They don't aspire to concrete Western assistance in armed struggle. (The United States happily helps to arm other freedom struggles. But if any outside power is helping South African blacks to stockpile weapons, it's the Soviets.) The blacks would be quite content for the moment simply to move the West away from its all but rhetorical indifference to apartheid toward some concrete solidarity with the disdained and disenfranchised majority. And every official action and expression of the South African government inches the West belatedly toward solidarity with apartheid's victims. The tribunes of these victims ask, after all, only for negotiations—hardly a radical demand.

But what is there to talk about? The dismantling of the apartheid system? This item, however artfully disguised, will never appear on any conceivable negotiation agenda. Even Professor Roger Fisher could not get the rulers of South Africa to "yes" on this one. But ending apartheid is exactly what social peace in South Africa requires. It is not just the black leaders who have made it a precondition for the restoration of order. Apartheid has become an intolerable offense virtually against nature itself. It is a burden that can no longer be borne. At the same time it is a corrupt privilege, founded on a bogus theology and a false science, which its beneficiaries will fight for rather than forfeit. This is is why South Africa is beyond the point of no return. Americans are characterologically unprepared to see any problem as intractable. We are inclined to believe that with sufficient goodwill, ingenuity, and communication skills every problem could be solved peaceably. It is not always so.

Thanks to Alistair Horne's brilliant analytic narrative *A Savage War of Peace*, Algeria has become the model of the postcolonial struggle in many minds. There are some telling comparisons with the current situation in South Africa: the incompatibility of interests, the fratricide among the excluded, the randomness of the violence, the flatulence of most peace proposals. But there are at least two crucial differences. First, the French settlers in Algeria

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could "go home" even if, after a century, France was not quite home. There is no place for the Afrikaners to go after four centuries, and no place really for the English-speaking either. Apart from a recent influx of failed fortune seekers and racist riffraff, South Africa's whites are as native as its blacks. Second, the battle of Algiers could be ended by the faraway government in Paris once the war became too costly. The fate of South Africa's whites is not controlled from abroad.

The greater the threat, then, the harsher and more reckless the response. In South Africa one side is desperate for justice, the other side desperate for dominance—a dominance to which they freely became habituated captives. There is no moral equivalence in their desperation, but it would be a mistake not to see that oppressor and oppressed are both desperate, and to understand how the factions understand the stakes.

There is no group grievance in the world more pure or just than that of the blacks of South Africa. But the obvious justice of their grievance does not make for an obvious solution. All blacks in South Africa are victims of utter disenfranchisement. Beyond that, however, the 22 million blacks in the country are not a united or undifferentiated mass. The one-man, one-vote electoral formula that the insurgent leadership has fixed on is designed for simple appeal to democrats everywhere. Questioning its applicability anywhere carries an onus. But the formula is not an authentic solution. Even supposing that whites would agree peacefully to it, the formula would only be used once: to overthrow white minority rule. After that happy demonstration of majoritarianism, South African politics would be more like the civil violence that afflicts the rest of the African continent, where warring tribes are locked in bloody national embrace thanks to lines drawn on maps by ignorant and capricious men in faraway Europe. A successful revolution most likely would turn out the same way. In some ways, in fact, apartheid has restrained that intra-black tribal warfare.

THE DIFFICULTY of imagining South Africa as a peaceful and stable multi-ethnic society is not just due to the counter-historical stubbornness of the white tribe, with its haughty claims of providential mission. The Zulu and the Sotho and the Xhosa peoples—there are others—also have their distinct histories, distinct identities, distinct myths, distinct destinies, and distinct and immemorial hatreds. The Zulus, for example, possess virtually every attribute of nationhood. These will not easily be submerged under some unitary state without a shedding of blood that easily could equal that of the imminent black-white battle. The fissures among the various black ethnic groups are apparent just below the strained surface of anti-apartheid unity. The violence between Indian and black in Durban, moreover, is only an inkling of what is yet to come among other groups.

We are inclined to avert our eyes from these terrible realities lest they seem to blunt the moral clarity of the struggle against apartheid. It is a silly constraint: no conceivable future sufferings could provide ethical sanction for the sufferings this system now inflicts on the majority. Progress against apartheid requires a readiness to understand the special anxiety of whites and Indians about what South Africa after apartheid might be like. Even among the Afrikaners, there are many who are repelled by apartheid. Though Indians have been relatively less degraded by the doctrine in power, their stake in change would be much greater if they were assured concretely and in advance that they would not be the post-apartheid scapegoats of warring black racialisms, as has happened elsewhere in Africa.

WHAT WE ARE SUGGESTING, in short, is that "separate development" need not be a code phrase for continuation of apartheid. The fraudulent "homelands" policy spawned by the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, designed to deny blacks all hope of either political rights or economic opportunity, is not the only possible model of—to use the word freighted with associations from other tortured regions—"partition."

The South African anti-apartheid activist and writer Ronald Segal wrote almost 25 years ago that "South Africa has become an integrated industrial society in which African, Indian, Coloured, and white cannot survive without each other." This, of course, is even more true today. The paradox is that although each group needs the other economically, and will need one another even more when black laborers are freed from toil that often borders on bondage, they fear each other politically. Reasonable people won't try to obscure these fears. On the contrary, they will be willing to explore the fears, even if it leads to contemplation of territorial divisions and federal schemes with wide local autonomy and reciprocal citizenships as alternatives to the mesmerizing dream of a singular wealthy South Africa under a central pluralist government. The very idea mocks reality.

Partition is hardly ever an ideal solution, but sometimes it is the only possible solution. Since there may be no plausible solution otherwise available to South Africa, this one is worth a few thoughts. To meet the black grievance, partition would have to be not a mere redistribution of its arid and impoverished areas, but a genuine reallocation of the wealth and power of the country. Simple geographical division obviously cannot achieve this. But a more complex arrangement, recognizing that jurisdiction over people and jurisdiction over land need not coincide, might fulfill the political and cultural requirements of racial and ethnic communities for identity, development, and dignity.

None of the entities born under a partition plan would be likely to meet all the standards of democratic polities that we demand for ourselves. But then there isn't one nation in all of Africa that comes remotely close. Still, blacks and whites should only be lucky enough to achieve something so distant from their present dreams of dominance and avenged justice, something so modest as partition.

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NOTEBOOK

□ ONCE AGAIN THE MEDIA have cast Israel in the role of the heavy, this time for being too finicky about whom it will talk to in proposed peace negotiations. But as soon as Prime Minister Shimon Peres agreed to come to the table with the Palestinians on the initial Arafat-Hussein list who actually come from the West Bank, the PLO began to have second thoughts about these particular folk. Who, then, is not eager for talks? We have suspected all along that what the PLO wants is not talks with Israel but talks only with the United States. This has now been brazenly confirmed by Abu Jihad, the nom de guerre of Khalil Wazzir, the PLO military commander and Yasir Arafat's deputy, in an interview with Curtis Wilkie in *The Boston Globe* (August 17). According to Wilke, "Abu Jihad said the biggest stumbling block is an American insistence that the talks lead to direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Arab delegation." This is a startling admission; direct negotiations, after all, should be precisely what Palestinians most devoutly wish. Instead we have been given yet another illustration of the political incompetence of Palestinian nationalism.

□ PORK AND BILE: We all know about the pork barrel. Local communities or special interests get government goodies because the benefit is concentrated while the cost is diffused. The beneficiaries find it worthwhile to fight for their pork barrel projects and it's not worthwhile for anybody else to oppose them. John J. Pitney Jr., a Republican congressional aide, has coined another term—the "bile barrel"—to describe a seemingly different but actually similar problem. There are some government enterprises where the benefit is diffused and the cost is concentrated. Toxic waste dumps are one example. Prisons are another. Political reality gives any particular community a virtual veto on them, even though the populace as a whole would benefit. Together, the pork barrel and the bile barrel explain why America has more highways and water projects than it needs and not enough prisons or toxic waste dumps. The solution, we submit, is obvious: mix bile and pork. A community that wants its harbor dredged by the Corps of Engineers would have to take a new prison as well; a state applying for mass transit funds would have to "pay" for them by agreeing to store some nuclear by-products for a couple of centuries or so.

□ SALVADORANS NOTE JOURNALIST SPLIT:

Split Noted In Salvadoran Rebel Front
—*The Washington Post*, August 19

Salvador Rebels Unite
—*The Wall Street Journal*, August 19

□ BACKGROUND BRIEFING: This week's cover story grew out of work that the authors, Jeff Howard and Ray Hammond, have done along with Gloria White-Hammond and Anita Howard as members of the Efficacy Committee, a nonprofit organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts, committed to furthering the intellectual development of black youth. For ten years the committee has conducted seminars and training programs on the psychology of performance for minority college students. Over the past three years the committee has employed black professional volunteers to serve as instructors in a program to increase graduation rates and academic performance among black high school students. For further information on their work, contact the Efficacy Committee, Six Cameron Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144.

POSTCARD MOSCOW

AT THE MOVIES

A FRIEND who recently visited Moscow for the first time concluded from its shabbiness that the Soviets don't really have nuclear weapons after all. Many Westerners have a smug initial reaction to Soviet life, and it's easy to see why. When I checked into my hotel, I headed straight for the shower, where the faucet promptly came off in my hand. These Russkies, I gloated, can't do anything right! But looking closely, I saw the brand name inside the fixture: American Standard. My proof of a planned economy's defects was, like all the plumbing in the bathroom, made in Illinois.

Two movies now playing here also teach an unwary visitor not to trust first impressions. They express nostalgia for two past leaders, Czar Nicholas II and Yuri Andropov. The czar, not a standard cinematic hero, appears as a sympathetic if weak character in *Agoniya*, which opens with some barely concealed comparisons between pre-1914 Russia and the Soviet Union today. (Czarist Russia was a mighty power, and no diplomatic issue could be solved without her, but she was also backward, owed heaps of money to the West, and couldn't feed her own people. Sounds like Bolshevism hasn't done much, right?) The film's satirical tone surprised me, and the Moscow rumor is that Gorbachev himself approved it. Some Russians see evidence here of artistic loosening. But others insist that the scenes of corruption and decadence (the film can't get enough of Rasputin's sexual antics) are more than just joking allusions to the "court" of Leonid Brezhnev. To them, the message is that internal decay will allow Russia to be pushed around in the world, as she was in the war. So what's needed now is firmer rule at home. No wonder Gorbachev gave the go-ahead. Liberalization in the arts doesn't always carry a liberal message.

Pages from a Life, a new documentary about Andropov, begins by glorifying his sensitivity and cultivation. The

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camera shows Andropov's dacha (the narrator recalls, "He loved the quiet there"), a volume of Kant from his library, and a carving of Don Quixote from his desk. We hear the Chopin that he liked to play as a boy (also a minor-key heresy: Lenin hated music), and a friend praises Yuri's "beautiful voice." But all these qualities are mere prologue to what Andropov's life was really about. The episode of his career told in the most loving detail is his heroic role in crushing the Hungarian revolution of 1956. And the longest single clip (which looks like a home movie) is his speech, about the sacred calling of secret-police work, at a 1982 farewell party thrown by his KGB colleagues. Here love of quiet is raised from a private pursuit to a political principle.

Later I tried, without success, to convey the interest of the film to a *refusenik*, a man who lost his research job years ago and is now a manual laborer. "I know all I need to about the KGB," he said. The public agrees. Admission is only ten kopecks (12 cents), but there weren't ten people in the audience. *Agoniya*, which costs a ruble and a half (about $1.85), is always packed. Even in a socialist paradise, bare breasts and nostalgia pull in the crowds.

JUST before I got to Moscow, the newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossiya* criticized the low quality of official propaganda, and the Central Committee man in charge, a Mr. Stukalin, was sent off to an ambassadorial job (as it happens, to Andropov's old post in Budapest). I'd have voted against him too. He ran an organization with a limitless budget for red banners across streets and block-long billboards on top of buildings, saying things like: "Boys and girls of the Soviet Union, multiply the revolutionary, fighting, and working traditions of the Communist Party and the Soviet people!"

You can understand, of course, why the ideological gendarmes stick with these proved formulas. Experiment, and right away the artists and writers will sneak in some devilishly subversive theme. In one Moscow subway station—amid much other artwork done in the approved totalitarian-Marvel-Comic style—there's a mosaic that is unmistakably a Madonna and Child. It's not beautiful (the stars and spaceships, probably a disguise of some sort, ruin it). But the surprise is that it's there at all. Who could have let this happen? And where is he now? My guess was, off appreciating the quiet of nature, somewhere far away.

My first guess, anyway. But in Moscow you soon realize the right answer may be that he was promoted. A good apparatchik can take what seems subversive and put it to manipulative use. Take religious symbols: while I was chatting with a guide at the International Youth Festival, I sneezed, and he casually said, "God bless you." The conversation resumed, but he soon returned to the matter. "Remember how I said 'God bless you' a moment ago?" he asked. "That showed we can learn from each other, sharing vocabularies and concepts. Now, what we Soviets mean by military security. . . ."

This was transparent enough, but transparency is rare here, even for Soviets. One reacts to what's happening without really knowing what's going on. An everyday event: two well-dressed guys go right to the front of a two-hour-long line at a fast-food stand in Gorky Park, and no one says a word. Why should they? You, an impatient and indignant foreigner, are steaming, but do you know that those guys aren't KGB? Or take a truly unusual occurrence, which took place during my stay: a TV show is suddenly interrupted so that a recently arrested dissident can read a confession and name accomplices. Days later, Russians who told me about the event still had no idea what it meant for him, or for them.

Uncertainty and ignorance have become the true staples of Soviet life. Another *refusenik* (who struck me as otherwise very hardheaded) described the loss of confidence that isolation produces: "We're very naive. We simply have no experience of real political choice, or of real political conditions. This means you can't rely too much on our judgments. You have to rely on your own."

NOEL JOHNSON

Noel Johnson, a pseudonym, was in Moscow during the recent Youth Festival.

Why intellectuals miss baseball's pitch.

EGGHEADS STRIKE OUT

DAN JENKINS, the purposefully prosaic sportswriter, puts it best. "I find it amusing," he writes, that fellow baseball writers "turn lyrical as they sit down at their typing machines. Baseball does it. Along comes baseball season and guys who later in the summer will be writing their normal hard-hitting two-sentence paragraphs—'Fastballer Jesus Marquez likes to throw at white people. His father was a doorman'—suddenly begin to use words like ephemeral and catharsis." What Jenkins doesn't note is that this affliction is even more pronounced among intellectuals. Take this passage. "Baseball, like Stengel's long life of peaks and valleys, is like spring itself. It illustrates regeneration, resurrection, and life's second chances." Or this. "Life is vain, the world is a moral void, the universe is an empty shell. Then proper Americans look toward April, the horizon where the sun will rise. The sun is baseball."

Why would George Will, who wrote both of these inspirational messages, feel the need to stray from his Burkean universe to pass judgment on the game of baseball? And why would renaissance scholar and Yale president A. Bartlett Giamatti describe baseball as "this grand game, no game but a work of art fashioned to remind us that we all began in the great green Elysian Field of the New World, with all its terrors and promises"? The answer may be found in the George Bush Doctrine, wherein one lavishes

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excessive praise on something in the hope of capturing some of its magic. Scores of American intellectuals believe that by proclaiming their worship of baseball they can tap into the zeitgeist of the masses.

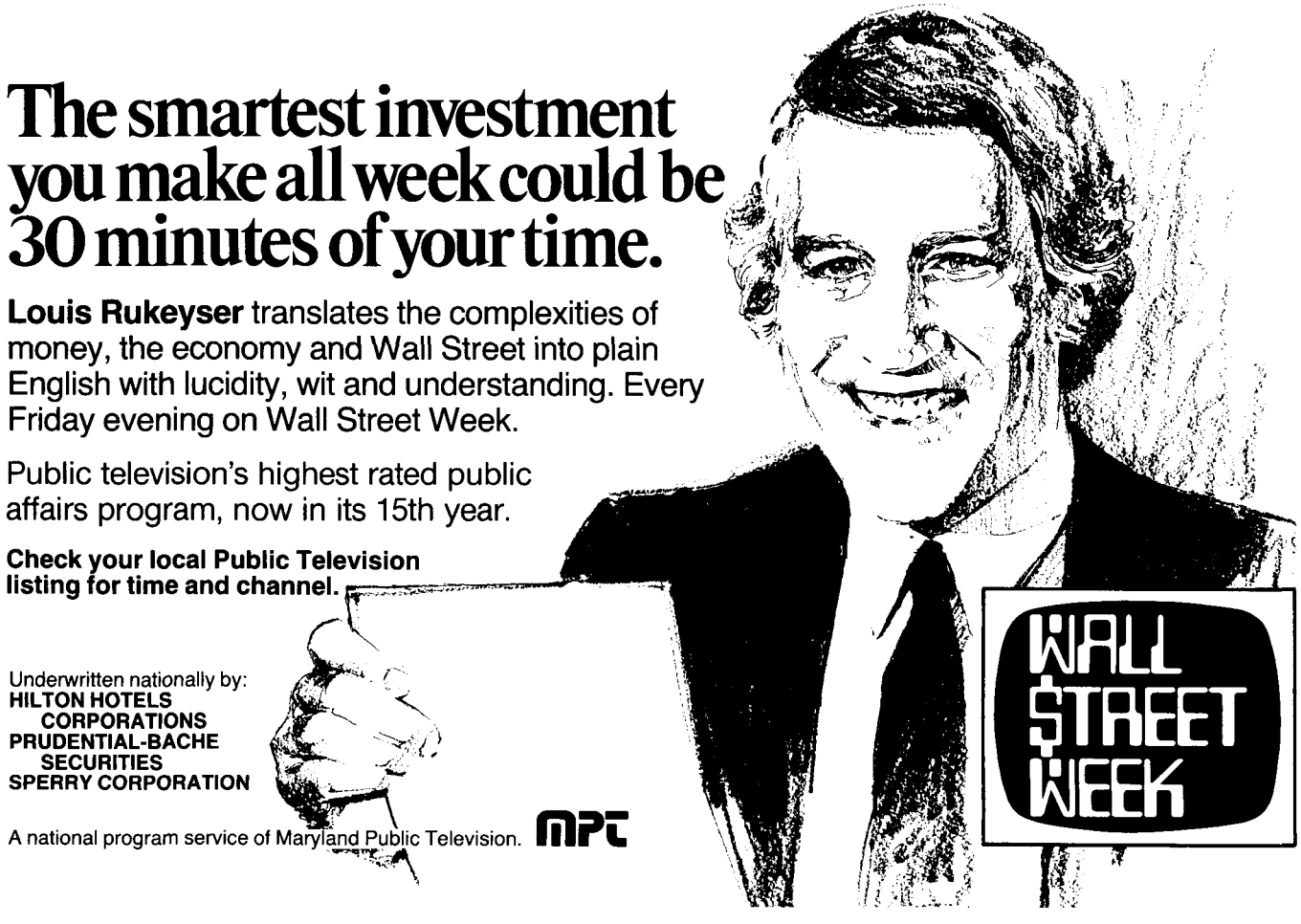
Unfortunately, they almost always fail, with results that verge on the comical. Instead of unifying the ballparks and the ivory towers, the would-be egghead populists inevitably find themselves mired in a swamp of clichés and rhetorical overkill. The poet Donald Hall, one of the more respectable of the breed, calls this style the "high belletristic tradition." Hall, who has just published an anthology of essays on sports, is referring to the likes of Roger Angell and Roger Kahn, who are among the few sportswriters who get away with it. Hall himself sometimes does not. "The diamonds and rituals of baseball create an elegant, trivial, enchanted grid on which our suffering, shapeless, sinful day leans for the momentary grace of order," he writes without apparent irony in an essay titled "Baseball and the Meaning of Life."

Another part of the baseball salon crowd can be found on college campuses, where the sociology of sport has achieved a measure of credibility. Sport sociologists who teach for-credit courses on the "concept" of sport and leisure have also built up a small bibliography of scholarly material that attempts to imbue baseball with cosmic significance.

Academics who dabble in baseball sociology tend to follow strict guidelines. For one, they must link baseball—as opposed to dozens of other sports that do not provide a mirror to America's soul—to nearly every aspect of American life. To this end, they must always quote Columbia University's Jacques Barzun: "He who would know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." Albright College's David Voigt, whose *America Through Baseball* is a model of the genre, writes in defense of himself and Barzun: "This statement serves both as justification and apology for interpreting American culture through baseball. But why should I apologize for such an undertaking?" The question is rhetorical.

The sociologist must go on to claim brotherhood with Alfred Kinsey, that Christ figure in the cause of academic freedom. "For now at least the student of baseball must shoulder the thinly disguised contempt of his colleagues," Voigt writes. "Of course, his lot is lighter than that of the late Alfred Kinsey, whose researches into American sex behavior carried his reputation to extremes of fame and infamy." Alfred Boe and Lyle Olsen take a similar tack in an introductory essay in *Arete: The Journal of Sport Literature*, published out of San Diego State University: "In its role and reputation in academia, sport is clearly kin to the study of sexual behavior. Until recently, to study 'seriously' either phenomenon (sport or sex) was ridiculed by most university faculties. Sport and sex were to be performed, not studied."

Baseball sociologists also find it necessary to quote St. John de Crèvecoeur's 1782 essay *Letters from an American*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Farmer, in which the French-born author and agriculturalist asks, "What then is the American, this new man?" Voigt calls the question "haunting." Richard Crepeau in *Baseball: America's Diamond Mind* says of Crèvecoeur's query: "This was a question without a definitive answer in the eighteenth century, and it still is. It is also a question of prime and timely importance, at least to Americans. A study of baseball may provide some direction in the search for an answer."

And Crepeau does search. His account of baseball in American life from 1919 to 1941 makes a series of unlikely claims designed to show how baseball mirrored society as a whole. Wrapping up a section on how baseball fared during World War I, Crepeau concludes: "Not only had the players contributed to the process of making the world safe for democracy, but that experience had contributed to the betterment of the players themselves." Of the interwar period, Crepeau writes, "Baseball in the Twenties and Thirties reflected the American fan's continued faith in the principles of democracy and opportunity, long a part of the American ethos."

Voigt goes even further, tracing baseball's nationalist tendencies and its role in the epochal events of our time (while millions were dying in Europe, baseball fans were facing a crisis of their own. . .). Describing opening day 1973, when Richard Nixon asked freed prisoners from the Vietnam War to throw out the first balls, Voigt intones: "This was another reminder of the game's obligation to support the litany of peace with honor while ignoring hard won lessons that Vietnam may have held."

Amid all of this lofty speculating, the reader gets little sense of baseball itself—a game, as Dan Jenkins reminds us, where "athletes mostly like to stand around, chew things, spit and scratch their nuts." There are musings on the psychosexual implications of the batter's box and the deterministic, Comtean positivism of the diamond-shaped base path, but there is rarely a mention of the most elemental of baseball sensations: the fear of getting hit by the ball, for instance.

CLEARLY, baseball lyricists and theorists are aiming at something different. Writers like Will and Giamatti, who are doomed to hover above the general populace, must see in baseball a risk-free chance to declare themselves one with the American heartland. Michael Novak, the conservative Catholic writer, wants no less than to apotheosize baseball as the sport of God and capitalism. "Baseball is as close a liturgical enactment of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant myth as the nation has," Novak writes in *The Joy of Sports*, a shameless ode to the godliness of sport and American culture. "In those nations where, in various forms, individualism and personal honor and the dignity of a man alone are deeply cherished, baseball elicits a responsive chord: in Latin nations, in Japan, in the United States." Like otherwise reasonable grown-ups who suddenly proclaim that they *understand* Madonna or Bruce Springsteen, these writers are more interested in allying themselves with the concepts of baseball (spring, American values, individualism, fatherhood, and so on) than in the game itself.

John Updike, whose famous elegy for Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox probably inaugurated the genre, wanted less to celebrate the slugger's last game than to celebrate the fact that he, scion of American intellectuals, was slumming with the masses that day: "Like a feather caught in a vortex, Williams ran around the square at the center of our beseeching screaming." Clearly, Updike, Will, et al., are less concerned with giving us a sense of the game than they are in pleading for themselves: we love baseball. Love us.

MICHAEL HIRSCHORN

Jefferson & Madison on school prayer.

FOUNDING INTENTIONS

HISTORY is at the center of the current debate over the proper relationship between church and state under the First Amendment. Both advocates and opponents of government support for religion charge the other side with tendentious readings of history. Each side accuses the other of being unfaithful to the intentions of the Founding Fathers. Yet, for the most part, neither side has examined the key historical document: Virginia's 1785 Statute for Religious Liberty. This year is its bicentennial.

The most sophisticated case made today for prayer in public schools is that the Founding Fathers never intended to establish an absolute wall between church and state. The framers only intended, as Justice William H. Rehnquist put it in a recent Supreme Court dissent, "to prohibit the designation of any church as a 'national' one [and] to stop the Federal Government from asserting a preference for one religious denomination or sect over others." President Reagan, Education Secretary William Bennett, and columnists George Will and James J. Kilpatrick have joined Rehnquist in insisting that the framers did not intend for the government to favor irreligion or atheism over religion. They contend that the government can and should take action, such as permitting school prayer, that encourages a general belief in God.

The Virginia Statute was the model for the religious clause of the First Amendment. Thomas Jefferson wrote the measure in 1779 to end Virginia's religious tests for public office and the collection of taxes for the Anglican Church. Powerful Anglicans in the Virginia House of Burgesses blocked approval of the bill for several years. But James Madison launched a massive petition drive that led to its passage in October 1785. There is no doubt that Madison had the Virginia law in mind four years later when he distilled his thoughts on religious liberty into ten words in the First Amendment to the new U.S. Constitution.

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Both sides of the current debate might claim an important passage in the preamble to the statute to support their case. It states: "The impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavouring to impose them on others, hathe established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time."

Supporters of school prayer would argue that Jefferson, in this passage, framed his argument in religious terms. By declaring that the imposition of one's own "modes of thinking" was "impious," he demonstrated that his aim was to encourage reverence for God. He sought to limit "dominion" of the few so that the "the faith of others" was not thwarted. Far from saying that the government had to be neutral on religion, Jefferson was saying (it might be argued) that government merely had to be neutral among religious sects. But did Jefferson think religion so important that the state should take a hand in fostering it? Or did he think it so important that the state should *never* take a hand in fostering it?

The answer Jefferson proceeded to give in the rest of the Virginia Statute seems clear: the government could not prefer one religion over another, or even prefer religion over irreligion. The law stated "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief." The state, Jefferson took care to emphasize, was forbidden from imposing not just a specific "belief" but "any" general "religious opinions." This sweeping formulation clearly was meant to protect nonbelief in God, not just belief in the religion of one's choice. The government, in Jefferson's view, should express no preference "whatsoever."

Jefferson recognized that a government could do no less than guarantee complete freedom of conscience. If the rights of believers were to be safe, the rights of nonbelievers had to be protected as well. "Our civil rights," Jefferson said in the statute, "have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry." The government had no more business fostering any kind of religious opinion than it had promoting Newtonian physics or Euclidean geometry.

IT IS TRUE that some other Americans at the time envisioned the United States as a godly, Christian republic. But they also envisioned it as a republic where slavery was legal and women had no right to vote. Although few signers of the Declaration of Independence believed that the statement "all men are created equal" applied to blacks and women, no one today would deny that it does. The principle of religious freedom was broader than the particular circumstances that generated it.

In any case, it was Jefferson who wrote the Virginia Statute and Madison who wrote the First Amendment. It is their intentions that deserve the closest scrutiny. Jefferson, who believed in God, issued no religious proclamations during his presidency and in 1818 opposed establishing a professorship in divinity at the University of Virginia. (He recommended instead—shades of secular humanism!—a professorship of ethics.) Madison's energetic support for the Virginia Statute tells us even more about the intended meaning of the First Amendment. Madison believed his amendment did much more than merely prohibit the establishment of a national church. He inveighed against presidential proclamations of religious feast days and even objected to the appointment of congressional chaplains. "The establishment of the chaplainship to Congress," he declared in 1832, "is a palpable violation of equal rights, as well as of Constitutional principles." This from the man who wrote the Bill of Rights.

Madison and Jefferson believed that each individual had the right to arrive at his own religious beliefs without outside coercion, especially from government. Jefferson noted in the statute "that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and had nothing to fear from the conflict." Jefferson went on to say that, "unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate," truth will triumph. "Errors," he added, cease "to be dangerous when [truth] is permitted to contradict them."

Putative defenders of religion want the government to take sides in the "free argument and debate" over religion. They would, in Jefferson's words, "disarm" truth by asserting that belief in God was not open to question. Their "interposition" would resurrect a principle that Jefferson and Madison wanted to repudiate once and for all.

ROSEMARIE ZAGARRI

Rosemarie Zagarri is assistant professor of American history at West Virginia University.

Black against white, black against black.

FALLING APARTHEID

Johannesburg

ONE OF THE remarkable facts about South African history is that white Afrikaners, who compose only about nine percent of the country's population, have kept themselves in power for so long. Among the reasons for their success is the contentiousness among the various opposition groups. Riven by differences of color and political outlook, they have always disagreed and fought among themselves about the best strategy with which to oppose the Afrikaners, and about the nature of the South African society they envision. In contrast, the Afrikaner

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nationalists have been ruthlessly single-minded in implementing and enforcing their racial ideology.

These days, however, Afrikaners are not nearly as united as they were. Many in the government had hinted that President P.W. Botha would propose major initiatives to end the country's growing racial unrest in a speech last week. Clearly there was support for some kind of reforms. But Botha responded to the press leaks detailing imminent concessions with a defiant speech declaring that Afrikaners would concede nothing. In the past, disagreements about how to ensure Afrikaner survival have led extreme rightists, who cling to rigid racist attitudes, to break away

DEATH OF A DAILY

ONE OF THE casualties of the present upheaval in South Africa has been *The Rand Daily Mail*, the renowned opponent of apartheid. It was not the government that closed the newspaper last spring, after 83 years, although there are more than 100 laws that severely restrict the press. The censors were English-speaking white business leaders—the very people who often claim to oppose apartheid.

Over the past 25 years the *Mail* came to be known as "the real opposition." In the mid-60s a new editor, Laurence Gandar, had moved the editorial page in a decisively more liberal direction, and increased the *Mail*'s news coverage of black and political affairs. The paper quickly came under government attack.

The *Mail*'s progressive slant won it a growing black readership, but a number of white readers canceled their subscriptions; some even deserted after it stopped referring to blacks as "natives." In the mid-70s the regime took advantage of this discontent. It secretly funded a rival, far-right English-language paper called *The Citizen*. The *Mail* helped to expose the maneuver, but advertisers moved toward the new paper; the *Mail*'s black readers had little demographic weight.

The official reason for closing the *Mail* was its financial losses—$7.5 million in 1984, $23 million over the previous ten years. Yet to Harry Oppenheimer, the billionaire mine owner whose Anglo-American Corporation controlled 40 percent of the paper, such sums are loose change. His massive enterprise has made as much as $340 million in a single quarter. Oppenheimer portrays himself as a reformer; he told an audience in New York City last fall, "I have spent a lifetime fighting against policies of racial discrimination in South Africa."

Nevertheless, Oppenheimer clearly benefits from those policies. South Africa's 22 million blacks are permitted to own land and live permanently in only 13 percent of the country, in the Bantustans. The other 87 percent, which includes all the large cities, the mines, and the best farmland, is designated as "white" South Africa. Nearly all of the half-million black miners, and millions of blacks in factories and other jobs, are migrant workers. They are required by law to leave their families behind in the Bantustans, and to live alone in single-sex compounds for most of the year, returning usually only at Christmas.

The owners thus do not have to build more costly family housing at the mines, and they can maintain wages at artificially low levels because the migrant's wife and children are contributing at least something to family income from their small plots of land. (Black miners still earn only just over $100 a month, less than one-fifth of what white miners get.) Probably most important, the migratory system weakens the job continuity that would create the friendships and trust essential to a strong labor union.

Some of the reporters and photographers at *The Rand Daily Mail*, both blacks and whites, have been at the forefront of those exposing "apartheid" as more than just segregated buses and restaurants. They revealed the abysmal conditions in the Bantustans, where infant mortality is the highest in Africa. They broke stories about the new black unions, which included, finally, the founding of a miners' organization in 1982.

Yet the *Mail* was not revolutionary. It criticized the African National Congress, the underground guerrilla movement, and gave full editorial support to the moderate Progressive Federal Party. For the English-speaking business community, however, the *Mail* was still striking too close to home. In 1982 the owners fired Allister Sparks, the outspoken editor. That failed to tone down the paper enough, so they used the financial losses as an excuse to close the paper. They started a journal called *Business Day*, a publication that is not likely to be overly preoccupied with the fate of black migrant workers.

Orwell once wrote that hypocrisy is the characteristic vice of the English. In southern Africa it has flourished like healthy bougainvillea. Perceptive Afrikaner Nationalists used to say that the typical English-speaker "says he is a Progressive, actually votes for the United Party [a now-defunct centrist group], and thanks God every night that we Nationalists are still in power."

The demise of the *Mail* calls into question the sincerity of Oppenheimer and other business leaders even in their dealings with U.S. corporations and banks. They want the Americans to maintain billions of dollars of investment and loans in South Africa because, they insist, such economic involvement will help bring reform. But they would not reach into their own pockets for $7.5 million to keep alive one of the country's most important voices for genuine change.

Some years ago, during one of the government's periodic attacks on the *Mail*, I visited its deputy editor, Benjamin Pogrund. I asked him how far the repression would have to go before journalism in South Africa would seem fruitless. "They do tell us what we *can't* put in the paper," he said. "But they don't yet tell us what we *must* put in the paper. If that happens. . . ." Pogrund and his colleagues never had to consider that difficult choice. Harry Oppenheimer made it for them.

JAMES NORTH

James North is the author of *Freedom Rising* (Macmillan).

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from the ruling Nationalist Party. The Afrikaner uncertainty about the future is one indication that the end of the long reign of apartheid has started. Meanwhile, anticipation of victory is spurring on anti-apartheid forces, and is increasing the division and bloodletting among them.

President Botha continues to attribute the escalating violence to "Communist powers and Communist-inspired powers," and describes his government's current emergency decree as a crucial measure to "restore order" among those who "murder black people and try to disrupt the normal life of black communities." Yet even under ordinary circumstances this "normal life" is affected by what anti-apartheid circles call "institutional violence"—the force that the Afrikaners, aided and abetted by the English-speaking whites, use to control the black majority. The network of laws constructed for this purpose is brutally applied, whether to determine where blacks must live or work, or to stamp upon those whose dissent grows dangerous.

It is hardly surprising that half a century of state-sanctioned racism and violence, far from ensuring social control, has spread disorganization, rebellion, and radicalism among blacks. Racial fears have made it commonplace for white men and women to carry guns—and to use them with a menacing and facile irresponsibility. The black residential areas are plagued with incidents of rape, robbery, and murder. Soweto, the vast black ghetto outside Johannesburg, is among the most crime-ridden areas of the world.

Black resistance to apartheid has been growing for decades. Sabotage perpetrated by black underground groups—usually aimed at industrial plants and government buildings, but sometimes at people as well—began as long ago as December 1961. In more recent times, beginning with the revolt in 1976 by black schoolchildren in Soweto against their inferior education, a regular pattern has developed. Blacks gather to demonstrate, armed policemen order them to disperse, and when the demonstrators refuse to go—sometimes throwing stones or Molotov cocktails—the police move in with tear smoke, quirts, or bullets. In the 11 months since the present bout of violence erupted, demonstrators have taken to commandeering buses, or stoning or burning down houses and stores of blacks considered to be "collaborators" with the white rulers. Funerals of victims of police shootings, which have become forums for airing political grievances, spawn new conflict. The clashes between people and police have accounted for perhaps as many as two-thirds of the more than 600 deaths in the last year, and are a continuation, although in heightened form, of the violence that is woven into the fabric of South African society.

AN ENTIRELY new form of violence is responsible for the other deaths. This emanates from attacks on blacks by other blacks, and exists at several levels. The first includes the attacks on those who are seen as "collaborators," people who have participated in government-created town councils aimed at getting blacks to run their own ghettos. It can extend to anyone suspected of being a police informer, such as 24-year-old Roseline Maki Skosana, whose gory death in late July—she was beaten and burned to death—was carried worldwide on television. Church sources say Skosana had twice dated a policeman, which led to the allegation about her being an informer.

Other attacks have taken place on Indian and mixed-race leaders who have high public profiles because they have chosen to take part in the reform process offered by the government. Hand grenades have been flung at the homes of several of them.

Then there is the violence among rival anti-apartheid political movements, resulting in many assaults and deaths, the burning down of houses, and the breaking up of meetings. Essentially it's a struggle for power, both in the immediate political sense and with an eye to the coming of freedom in South Africa as a whole.

The most direct protagonists in recent months have been the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum, also known by the name of its chief constituent body, Azapo (Azanian People's Organization). The UDF, by far the dominant group, is a broad-based, multiracial umbrella organization. It is widely viewed as the embodiment of the African National Congress, the black nationalist movement that was banned 25 years ago and that is the main, if not the only, source of sabotage activities. Its best-known leader is Nelson Mandela, who is serving a life sentence for trying to overthrow the government.

The parentage of the National Forum, also an umbrella body, is that of the black consciousness movement of the late Steve Biko, and before that of the Pan-Africanist Congress of the late Robert Sobukwe (which was also proscribed in 1960). It is an aggressive black nationalist group, which has taken a strong anti-American stance. It organized the demonstration against Senator Kennedy when he visited in January, charging—among other things—that he was an agent of imperialism.

Also involved is Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha, a movement whose popular base derives from the Zulu people, who make up the country's biggest single entity. Buthelezi is in the contradictory situation of vehemently opposing apartheid while simultaneously helping to give it credibility because he takes part in the government's tribal homeland structure. To what extent he enjoys support across a broader spectrum of blacks is uncertain. Buthelezi constantly reiterates his desire for black unity, despite sporadic clashes with the UDF.

THERE is also evidence of the existence of an Argentina-type death squad engaged in assassination that may have links with the government and/or with extreme right-wingers. Several years ago a white Marxist was murdered at his front door, and this year a number of black community leaders have died under mysterious circumstances. The most recent victim was Mrs. Victoria Mxenge. Her death precipitated what has become the final type of violence. After she was assassinated there was a general melee of killing, in which black thugs made use of the opportunity to

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cross the color line to attack Indians in the Durban area, and to loot homes and shops. Some blacks and other foes of apartheid openly ascribe her death to "the system," meaning the government. Others accuse the police; and still others accuse rival political groups. But no one really knows. Whether the subsequent rioting was straightforward thuggery or had political overtones is also unclear.

ALL OF THESE seething tensions finally overwhelmed the government's capacity to contain them. The government's writ no longer applied in a range of black ghettos around the country. Armed policemen and soldiers were sent in to patrol during the day, and all would be peaceful. But that night, or the next day, the violence would recur. So on July 21 the government declared a state of emergency in 36 districts, and embarked on wholesale arrests. By now more than 2,000 have been arrested and held without trial. Most have been released, with no charges filed and no explanation given. Others are still in custody, many in undisclosed locations.

The official reason for the state of emergency is summed up in President Botha's reference to "Communists." But Afrikaners have spent the past four decades blaming communists for any and every vestige of unrest among blacks, and the story has worn thin. Of course there is communist influence, particularly in the exiled African National Congress. It would be astonishing if this were not so, given that the Soviet bloc has consistently backed the ANC with financial and military support in its fight against apartheid, whereas the West has been perceived as aiding and abetting the South African government. The Communist Party of South Africa, underground and in exile since 1950, has created close links with the ANC through friendship, shared danger, and ideology, and these are bound to bear fruit. In addition, the South African government has given communism a form of respectability by equating it in black eyes with the struggle for freedom.

Still, as Bishop Desmond Tutu has noted, one doesn't need an agitator to tell a man that a nail in his shoe is hurting him. So much of black political activity has been driven into the shadows that it cannot easily be discerned just how pervasive communist influence is. There is, too, a gross and growing lack of knowledge about events in South Africa generally, caused by a decline in the state of the media and the increasing role of the police in disseminating information. Not only is the unrest so widespread that no one outside official circles can properly monitor it, but there is active discouragement for any journalists who try too hard: a dose of tear smoke, or a blast of birdshot, or, eventually, summary detention.

Chief Buthelezi has no doubt about who is responsible. Responding in early August to the outbreaks of looting and killing in his Natal province, he accused "a certain political organization"—patently the United Democratic Front—and the external mission of the African National Congress of "promoting this black on black confrontation, as well as promoting a program of self-laceration in having blacks burning down their own facilities." Buthelezi could be correct, at least regarding the violence prompted by the ANC's call from abroad to make the country "ungovernable." Nine years ago, when schoolchildren first led the onslaught in the streets against apartheid, black consciousness was the motivating force. Now the pendulum gives every sign of having swung, with the United Democratic Front—and hence the ANC—in the ascendancy. That does not, of course, necessarily mean that South Africa is about to fall into the lap of the ANC, despite the revolutionary and euphoric rhetoric—to "fight for freedom to the last drop of our blood"—being heard at home and abroad.

Afrikaner-led white power has barely been tested so far. Displacing the Afrikaner minority, and getting to a nonracist, shared society, is not going to be achieved quickly. President Botha summed up Afrikaner sentiment in his speech on August 15: "I am not prepared to lead white South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide. . . . We are not going to be deterred from doing what we think best, nor will we be forced into doing what we don't want to do." Notwithstanding this bristling defense, apartheid rule is certainly in decline. But no one should count on the Afrikaners giving way without a prolonged and bloody struggle.

BENJAMIN POGRUND

Benjamin Pogrund is a South African journalist. He was deputy editor of *The Rand Daily Mail*, which was closed on April 30.

A blueprint for fighting tax reform.

LOOPHOLE LOGIC

IF YOU WONDER why real tax reform will be hard to get, consider the campaign the housing industry has been waging to maintain its special preferences. Housing is far and away America's most heavily tax-favored industry. The two principal housing trade associations, the Home Builders and the Realtors, are among Washington's most influential lobbies, with active members in every congressional district and PACs that regularly top the campaign contributors' roster. In this year's competition for the most outlandish logic in defense of tax preferences, the housing industry wins the prize. Its case is worth studying in detail as a good example of the fallacious arguments that all sorts of special interests are using in attempts to protect their loopholes.

Housing actually fares pretty well in the administration's tax-reform package, since President Reagan did not dare to tamper with the mortgage interest deduction (total tax subsidy value: $28 billion). It ends the use of tax-free

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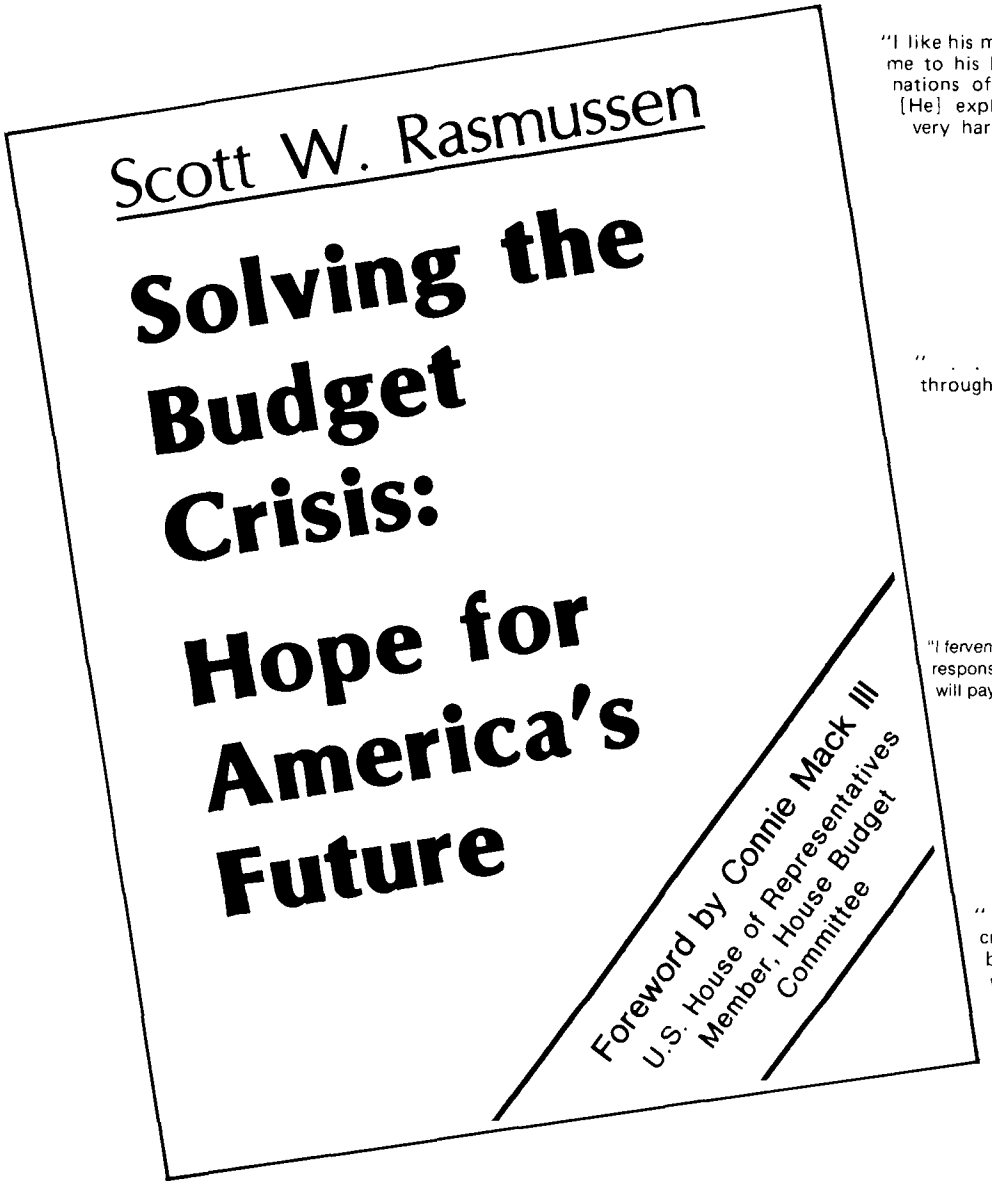
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municipal bonds to finance housing construction and first-time mortgages. It repeals the deductibility of local property taxes. And it restricts the interest deduction for mortgages on vacation homes. So the Home Builders are in high gear to amend or defeat the bill, with computer simulations, inch-thick press kits, public opinion surveys, and high-minded declarations about the housing needs of Americans.

According to the Home Builders, the tax-reform plan would raise apartment rents by 21 to 28 percent. They say it would depress housing construction by 325,000 units in 1986, with predictably disastrous effects on local jobs and economies. It would reduce the national rate of home ownership. If you are a tenant, it would raise your rent; if you are a home owner, it would somehow reduce the value of your house. The Home Builders do not report whether the tax bill will encourage termite infestation.

LET'S EXAMINE these arguments. The Home Builders contend in their press releases, for example, that the end of the property tax deduction means that fewer people will be able to afford homes. However, a passage in their full study contains the admission that other provisions in the tax bill "more than compensate most individuals for the loss of homeowner tax savings." In other words, most middle-income people are going to pay less in taxes, despite the loss of some deductions, because of lower rates. The few who don't might have to settle for a somewhat less costly house (a possibility the Home Builders don't even consider—to them, you either can afford "a house" or you can't).

But wait a minute. The Home Builders also try to frighten the public with the assertion that, because housing would lose some of its tax advantages, the value of their housing investment won't appreciate as fast as it has in the past. Ponder that one for a moment. What it's saying is that after tax reform houses will be cheaper. Those tax breaks that allegedly make a house more "affordable" actually get turned into higher prices. So who is hurt if houses get cheaper? Not young first-time home buyers, who will be helped. Not people who are selling a house and buying another; they break even or benefit if, as is usually the case, they're moving up to a bigger house. The only losers would be those who are selling their last house, who already have benefited from years of rapid appreciation, due in part to special tax breaks.

Above all, the Home Builders indulge the classic fallacy of all forensic economic projections. They fail to consider second- and third-order effects of one economic change. For example, many economists think that the tax bill, taken as a whole, will lower interest rates across the board. If that's correct, even a one percent drop in mortgage rates would more than cancel out any alleged negative effects on house purchasers.

The Home Builders' dire prophecies about rental housing are equally suspect. Today rental housing enjoys immense tax favoritism mainly because of accelerated depreciation. It's a huge tax shelter. Developers and landlords make much of their money by using real estate as a paper write-off against other income. Many also syndicate some of that paper tax loss to absentee investors. The tax-reform plan would substitute a more realistic, less inflated depreciation schedule. The Home Builders hypothesize that this loss of subsidy will force landlords to charge higher rents, or to stop building apartments and get into some other line of business.

You would think from this argument that landlords don't already charge as much rent as the market will bear. Removing their subsidy won't enable them to charge more, and there's no reason to suppose they're voluntarily charging less now. True, the loss of tax breaks for new construction may reduce the supply of rental apartments, which could raise rents somewhat. On the other hand, cheaper home ownership may reduce the demand for rental apartments as well, to name but one more second-order effect the Home Builders ignore.

Another important second-order effect would be a change in the motivation of developers and landlords. Today too many real estate investors are motivated by the prospect of paper tax losses and eventual capital gains. Accelerated depreciation provides too much income in the first few years that a landlord owns a building. This discourages the landlord from earning his living by being a good, long-term manager. Withdrawal of this tax subsidy would force landlords to make their money more by selling a service, and less by trading in tax shelters. Current depreciation rules encourage investors to hold a building for only a few years, before selling to a new owner who can take the depreciation all over again.

The Home Builders' study concludes that tax reform will lead to higher rentals and fewer new apartments by assuming that real estate investors require a certain rate of return—14 percent—and working backward from that assumption. What is sacrosanct about a 14 percent rate of return? A 14 percent nominal return is far higher than it was five years ago, when the inflation rate was more than double what it is today. And if the tax reforms have the anticipated effect of lowering interest rates, they will also lower the normal rate of return necessary to keep people investing in real estate.

THE TROUBLE with all of these pseudo-precise projections is that the imponderables far outweigh the certainties. Maybe we will have higher home ownership rates, because housing will become cheaper. Or maybe some Home Builders will quit the business, which will make housing more costly. Maybe we will have lower rental costs, because interest rates will come down. Maybe we will have better-run apartments, because the landlord will be on the phone to his accountant less and to his superintendent more. Who really knows? Not the Home Builders. Not anybody. Economists on the payroll of trade associations who perpetrate these blue-sky exercises in spurious rigor should not be allowed near a computer.

After all, it is not tenants and low-income home buyers who finance these studies and the lavish lobbying cam-

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paigns that go along with them. It is rich developers and real estate agents, because they are the direct beneficiaries. The pattern of argument is annoyingly familiar: the three-martini lunch supplies jobs for waiters and busboys, and so on.

In all these cases, the rejoinder is the same: subsidizing the rich is a stupid way to help the poor. It's true, for example, as the Home Builders argue, that the subsidy of first-home buyers through tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds has helped some low-income would-be home owners. But a large fraction of the lost revenue goes to wealthy bondholders and investment banks. Perhaps more important, where is all this solicitude when affluent people's tax shelters are not on the line?

Let me not leave the impression that this is a defense of the Reagan tax bill. As a whole, it's a hodgepodge. Too many concessions have already been made to business groups, and more will be forthcoming. But it's phony arguments like those of the Home Builders that have made it so. Unless members of Congress can bring themselves—and educate their constituents—to see through these bogus claims, we won't have tax reform worthy of the name.

ROBERT KUTTNER

The hidden obstacles to black success.

RUMORS OF INFERIORITY

BY JEFF HOWARD AND RAY HAMMOND

TODAY'S black Americans are the beneficiaries of great historical achievements. Our ancestors managed to survive the brutality of slavery and the long history of oppression that followed emancipation. Early in this century they began dismantling the legal structure of segregation that had kept us out of the institutions of American society. In the 1960s they launched the civil rights movement, one of the most effective mass movements for social justice in history. Not all of the battles have been won, but there is no denying the magnitude of our predecessors' achievement.

Nevertheless, black Americans today face deteriorating conditions in sharp contrast to other American groups. The black poverty rate is triple that of whites, and the unemployment rate is double. Black infant mortality not only is double that of whites, but may be rising for the first time in a decade. We have reached the point where more than half of the black children born in this country are born out of wedlock—most to teenage parents. Blacks account for more than 40 percent of the inmates in federal and state prisons, and in 1982 the probability of being murdered was six times greater for blacks than for whites. The officially acknowledged high school dropout rate in many metropolitan areas is more than 30 percent. Some knowledgeable observers say it is over 50 percent in several major cities. These problems not only reflect the current depressed state of black America, but also impose obstacles to future advancement.

Jeff Howard is a social psychologist; Ray Hammond is a physician and ordained minister.

The racism, discrimination, and oppression that black people have suffered and continue to suffer are clearly at the root of many of today's problems. Nevertheless, our analysis takes off from a forward-looking, and we believe optimistic, note: we are convinced that black people today, because of the gains in education, economic status, and political leverage that we have won as a result of the civil rights movement, are in a position to substantially improve the conditions of our communities using the resources already at our disposal. Our thesis is simple: the progress of any group is affected not only by public policy and by the racial attitudes of society as a whole, but by that group's capacity to exploit its own strengths. Our concern is about factors that prevent black Americans from using those strengths.

It's important to distinguish between the specific circumstances a group faces and its capacity to marshal its own resources to change those circumstances. Solving the problems of black communities requires a focus on the factors that hinder black people from more effectively managing their own circumstances. What are some of these factors?

Intellectual Development. Intellectual development is the primary focus of this article because it is the key to success in American society. Black people traditionally have understood this. Previous generations decided that segregation had to go because it relegated blacks to the backwater of American society, effectively denying us the opportunities, exposure, and competition that form the basis of intellectual development. Black intellectual development was one of the major benefits expected from newly won

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access to American institutions. That development, in turn, was expected to be a foundation for future advancement.

YET NOW, three decades after *Brown v. Board of Education*, there is pervasive evidence of real problems in the intellectual performance of many black people. From astronomical high school dropout rates among the poor to substandard academic and professional performance among those most privileged, there is a disturbing consistency in reports of lagging development. While some black people perform at the highest levels in every field of endeavor, the percentages who do so are small. Deficiencies in the process of intellectual development are one effect of the long-term suppression of a people; they are also, we believe, one of the chief causes of continued social and economic underdevelopment. Intellectual underdevelopment is one of the most pernicious effects of racism, because it limits the people's ability to solve problems over which they are capable of exercising substantial control.

Black Americans are understandably sensitive about discussions of the data on our performance, since this kind of information has been used too often to justify attacks on affirmative action and other government efforts to improve the position of blacks and other minorities. Nevertheless, the importance of this issue demands that black people and all others interested in social justice overcome our sensitivities, analyze the problem, and search for solutions.

The Performance Gap. Measuring intellectual performance requires making a comparison. The comparison may be with the performance of others in the same situation, or with some established standard of excellence, or both. It is typically measured by grades, job performance ratings, and scores on standardized and professional tests. In recent years a flood of articles, scholarly papers, and books have documented an intellectual performance gap between blacks and the population as a whole.

- In 1982 the College Board, for the first time in its history, published data on the performance of various groups on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The difference between the combined median scores of blacks and whites on the verbal and math portions of the SAT was slightly more than 200 points. Differences in family income don't explain the gap. Even at incomes over $50,000, there remained a 120-point difference. These differences persisted in the next two years.
- In 1983 the NCAA proposed a requirement that all college athletic recruits have a high school grade-point average of at least 2.0 (out of a maximum of 4.0) and a minimum combined SAT score of 700. This rule, intended to prevent the exploitation of young athletes, was strongly opposed by black college presidents and civil rights leaders. They were painfully aware that in recent years less than half of all black students have achieved a combined score of 700 on the SAT.
- Asian-Americans consistently produce a median SAT score 140 to 150 points higher than blacks with the same family income.
- The pass rate for black police officers on New York City's sergeant's exam is 1.6 percent. For Hispanics, it's 4.4 percent. For whites, it's 10.6 percent. These are the results *after* $500,000 was spent, by court order, to produce a test that was job-related and nondiscriminatory. No one, even those alleging discrimination, could explain how the revised test was biased.
- Florida gives a test to all candidates for teaching positions. The pass rate for whites is more than 80 percent. For blacks, it's 35 percent to 40 percent.

This is just a sampling. All these reports demonstrate a real difference between the performance of blacks and other groups. Many of the results cannot be easily explained by socioeconomic differences or minority status per se.

WHAT IS the explanation? Clear thinking about this is inhibited by the tendency to equate performance with ability. Acknowledging the performance gap is, in many minds, tantamount to inferring that blacks are intellectually inferior. But inferior performance and inferior ability are not the same thing. Rather, the performance gap is largely a behavioral problem. It is the result of a remediable tendency to avoid intellectual engagement and competition. Avoidance is rooted in the fears and self-doubt engendered by a major legacy of American racism: the strong negative stereotypes about black intellectual capabilities. Avoidance of intellectual competition is manifested most obviously in the attitudes of many black youths toward academic work, but it is not limited to children. It affects the intellectual performance of black people of all ages and feeds public doubts about black intellectual ability.

I. Intellectual Development

The performance gap damages the self-confidence of many black people. Black students and professional people cannot help but be bothered by poor showings in competitive academic and professional situations. Black leaders too often have tried to explain away these problems by blaming racism or cultural bias in the tests themselves. These factors haven't disappeared. But for many middle-class black Americans who have had access to educational and economic opportunities for nearly 20 years, the traditional protestations of cultural deprivation and educational disadvantage ring hollow. Given the cultural and educational advantages that many black people now enjoy, the claim that all blacks should be exempt from the performance standards applied to others is interpreted as a tacit admission of inferiority. This admission adds further weight to the questions, in our own minds and in the minds of others, about black intelligence.

The traditional explanations—laziness or inferiority on the one hand; racism, discrimination, and biased tests on the other—are inaccurate and unhelpful. What is required

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is an explanation that accounts for the subtle influences people exert over the behavior and self-confidence of other people.

Developing an explanation that might serve as a basis for corrective action is important. The record of the last 20 years suggests that waiting for grand initiatives from the outside to save the black community is futile. Blacks will have to rely on our own ingenuity and resources. We need local and national political leaders. We need skilled administrators and creative business executives. We need a broad base of well-educated volunteers and successful people in all fields as role models for black youths. In short, we need a large number of sophisticated, intellectually developed people who are confident of their ability to operate on an equal level with anyone. Chronic mediocre intellectual performance is deeply troubling because it suggests that we are not developing enough such people.

The Competitive Process. Intellectual development is not a fixed asset that you either have or don't have. Nor is it based on magic. It is a process of expanding mental strength and reach. The development process is demanding. It requires time, discipline, and intense effort. It almost always involves competition as well. Successful groups place high value on intellectual performance. They encourage the drive to excel and use competition to sharpen skills and stimulate development in each succeeding generation. The developed people that result from this competitive process become the pool from which leadership of all kinds is drawn. Competition, in other words, is an essential spur to development.

Competition is clearly not the whole story. Cooperation and solitary study are valuable, too. But of the various keys to intellectual development, competition seems to fare worst in the estimation of many blacks. Black young people, in particular, seem to place a strong negative value on intellectual competition.

Black people have proved to be very competitive at some activities, particularly sports and entertainment. It is our sense, however, that many blacks consider intellectual competition to be inappropriate. It appears to inspire little interest or respect among many youthful peer groups. Often, in fact, it is labeled "grade grubbing," and gives way to sports and social activity as a basis for peer acceptance. The intellectual performance gap is one result of this retreat from competition.

II. The Psychology of Performance

Rumors of Inferiority. The need to avoid intellectual competition is a psychological reaction to an image of black intellectual inferiority that has been projected by the larger society, and to a less than conscious process of internalization of that image by black people over the generations.

The rumor of black intellectual inferiority has been around for a long time. It has been based on grounds as diverse as twisted biblical citations, dubious philosophical arguments, and unscientific measurements of skull capacity. The latest emergence of this old theme has been in the controversy over race and IQ. For 15 years newsmagazines and television talk shows have enthusiastically taken up the topic of black intellectual endowment. We have watched authors and critics debate the proposition that blacks are genetically inferior to whites in intellectual capability.

Genetic explanations have a chilling finality. The ignorant can be educated, the lazy can be motivated, but what can be done for the individual thought to have been born without the basic equipment necessary to compete or develop? Of course the allegation of genetic inferiority has been hotly disputed. But the debate has touched the consciousness of most Americans. We are convinced that this spectacle has negatively affected the way both blacks and whites think about the intellectual capabilities of black people. It also has affected the way blacks behave in intellectually competitive situations. The general expectation of black intellectual inferiority, and the fear this expectation generates, cause many black people to avoid intellectual competition.

OUR HYPOTHESIS, in short, is this. (1) Black performance problems are caused in large part by a tendency to avoid intellectual competition. (2) This tendency is a psychological phenomenon that arises when the larger society projects an image of black intellectual inferiority and when that image is internalized by black people. (3) Imputing intellectual inferiority to genetic causes, especially in the face of data confirming poorer performance, intensifies the fears and doubts that surround this issue.

Clearly the image of inferiority continues to be projected. The internalization of this image by black people is harder to prove empirically. But there is abundant evidence in the expressed attitudes of many black youths toward intellectual competition; in the inability of most black communities to inspire the same commitment to intellectual excellence that is routinely accorded athletics and entertainment; and in the fact of the performance gap itself—especially when that gap persists among the children of economically and educationally privileged households.

Expectancies and Performance. The problem of black intellectual performance is rooted in human sensitivity to a particular kind of social interaction known as "expectancy communications." These are expressions of belief—verbal or nonverbal—from one person to another about the kind of performance to be expected. "Mary, you're one of the best workers we have, so I know that you won't have any trouble with this assignment." Or, "Joe, since everyone else is busy with other work, do as much as you can on this. When you run into trouble, call Mary." The first is a positive expectancy; the second, a negative expectancy.

Years of research have clearly demonstrated the powerful impact of expectancies on performance. The expectations of teachers for their students have a large effect on academic achievement. Psychological studies under a variety of circumstances demonstrate that communicated ex-

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pectations induce people to believe that they will do well or poorly at a task, and that such beliefs very often trigger responses that result in performance consistent with the expectation. There is also evidence that "reference group expectancies"—directed at an entire category of people rather than a particular individual—have a similar impact on the performance of members of the group.

EXPECTANCIES do not always work. If they come from a questionable source or if they predict an outcome that is too inconsistent with previous experience, they won't have much effect. Only credible expectancies—those that come from a source considered reliable and that address a belief or doubt the performer is sensitive to—will have a self-fulfilling impact.

The widespread expectation of black intellectual inferiority—communicated constantly through the projection of stereotyped images, verbal and nonverbal exchanges in daily interaction, and the incessant debate about genetics and intelligence—represents a credible reference-group expectancy. The message of the race/IQ controversy is: "We have scientific evidence that blacks, because of genetic inadequacies, can't be expected to do well at tasks that require great intelligence." As an explanation for past black intellectual performance, the notion of genetic inferiority is absolutely incorrect. As an expectancy communication exerting control over our present intellectual strivings, it has been powerfully effective. These expectancies raise fear and self-doubt in the minds of many blacks, especially when they are young and vulnerable. This has resulted in avoidance of intellectual activity and chronic underperformance by many of our most talented people. Let us explore this process in more detail.

The Expectancy/Performance Model. The powerful effect of expectancies on performance has been proved, but the way the process works is less well understood. Expectancies affect behavior, we think, in two ways. They affect performance behavior: the capacity to marshal the sharpness and intensity required for competitive success. And they influence cognition: the mental processes by which people make sense of everyday life.

Behavior. As anyone who has experienced an "off day" knows, effort is variable; it is subject to biological cycles, emotional states, motivation. Most important for our discussion, it depends on levels of confidence going into a task. Credible expectancies influence performance behavior. They affect the intensity of effort, the level of concentration or distractibility, and the willingness to take reasonable risks—a key factor in the development of self-confidence and new skills.

Cognition. Expectations also influence the way people think about or explain their performance outcomes. These explanations are called "attributions." Research in social psychology has demonstrated that the causes to which people attribute their successes and failures have an important impact on subsequent performance.

All of us encounter failure. But a failure we have been led to expect affects us differently from an unexpected failure. When people who are confident of doing well at a task are confronted with unexpected failure, they tend to attribute the failure to inadequate effort. The likely response to another encounter with the same or a similar task is to work harder. People who come into a task expecting to fail, on the other hand, attribute their failure to lack of ability. Once you admit to yourself, in effect, that "I don't have what it takes," you are not likely to approach that task again with great vigor.

Indeed, those who attribute their failures to inadequate effort are likely to conclude that more effort will produce a better outcome. This triggers an adaptive response to failure. In contrast, those who have been led to expect failure will attribute their failures to lack of ability, and will find it difficult to rationalize the investment of greater effort. They will often hesitate to continue "banging my head against the wall." They often, in fact, feel depressed when they attempt to work, since each attempt represents a confrontation with their own feared inadequacy.

THIS COMBINED EFFECT on behavior and cognition is what makes expectancy so powerful. The negative expectancy first tends to generate failure through its impact on behavior, and then induces the individual to blame the failure on lack of ability, rather than the actual (and correctable) problem of inadequate effort. This misattribution in turn becomes the basis for a new negative expectancy. By this process the individual, in effect, internalizes the low estimation originally held by others. This internalized negative expectancy powerfully affects future competitive behavior and future results.

The process we describe is not limited to black people. It goes on all the time, with individuals from all groups. It helps to explain the superiority of some groups at some areas of endeavor, and the mediocrity of those same groups in other areas. What makes black people unique is that they are singled out for the stigma of genetic intellectual inferiority.

The expectation of intellectual inferiority accompanies a black person into each new intellectual situation. Since each of us enters these tests under the cloud of predicted failure, and since each failure reinforces doubts about our capabilities, all intellectual competition raises the specter of having to admit a lack of intellectual capacity. But this particular expectancy goes beyond simply predicting and inducing failure. The expectancy message explicitly ascribes the expected failure to genes, and amounts to an open suggestion to black people to understand any failure in intellectual activity as confirmation of genetic inferiority. Each engagement in intellectual competition carries the weight of a test of one's own genetic endowment and that of black people as a whole. Facing such a terrible prospect, many black people recoil from any situation where the rumor of inferiority might be proved true.

For many black students this avoidance manifests itself in a concentration on athletics and socializing, at the expense of more challenging (and anxiety-provoking) academic work. For black professionals, it may involve a ten-

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dency to shy away from competitive situations or projects, or an inability to muster the intensity—or commit the time—necessary to excel. This sort of thinking and behavior certainly does not characterize all black people in competitive settings. But it is characteristic of enough to be a serious problem. When it happens, it should be understood as a less than conscious reaction to the psychological burden of the terrible rumor.

The Intellectual Inferiority Game. There always have been constraints on the intellectual exposure and development of black people in the United States, from laws prohibiting the education of blacks during slavery to the Jim Crow laws and "separate but equal" educational arrangements that persisted until very recently. In dismantling these legal barriers to development, the civil rights movement fundamentally transformed the possibilities for black people. Now, to realize those possibilities, we must address the mental barriers to competition and performance.

The doctrine of intellectual inferiority acts on many black Americans the way that a "con" or a "hustle" like three-card monte acts on its victim. It is a subtle psychological input that interacts with characteristics of the human cognitive apparatus—in this case, the extreme sensitivity to expectancies—to generate self-defeating behavior and thought processes. It has reduced the intellectual performance of millions of black people.

Intellectual inferiority, like segregation, is a destructive idea whose time has passed. Like segregation, it must be removed as an influence in our lives. Among its other negative effects, fear of the terrible rumor has restricted discussion by all parties, and has limited our capacity to understand and improve our situation. But the intellectual inferiority game withers in the light of discussion and analysis. We must begin now to talk about intellectual performance, work through our expectations and fears of intellectual inferiority, consciously define more adaptive attitudes toward intellectual development, and build our confidence in the capabilities of all people.

THE expectancy/performance process works both ways. Credible positive expectancies can generate self-confidence and result in success. An important part of the solution to black performance problems is converting the negative expectancies that work against black development into positive expectancies that nurture it. We must overcome our fears, encourage competition, and support the kind of performance that will dispel the notion of black intellectual inferiority.

III. The Commitment to Development

In our work with black high school and college students and with black professionals, we have shown that education in the psychology of performance can produce strong performance improvement very quickly. Black America needs a nationwide effort, now, to ensure that all black people—but especially black youths—are free to express their intellectual gifts. That effort should be built on three basic elements:

- Deliberate control of expectancy communications. We must begin with the way we talk to one another: the messages we give and the expectations we set. This includes the verbal and nonverbal messages we communicate in day-to-day social intercourse, as well as the expectancies communicated through the educational process and media images.
- Definition of an "intellectual work ethic." Black communities must develop strong positive attitudes toward intellectual competition. We must teach our people, young and mature, the efficacy of intense, committed effort in the arena of intellectual activity and the techniques to develop discipline in study and work habits.
- Influencing thought processes. Teachers, parents, and other authority figures must encourage young blacks to attribute their intellectual successes to ability (thereby boosting confidence) and their failures to lack of effort. Failures must no longer destroy black children's confidence in their intelligence or in the efficacy of hard work. Failures should be seen instead as feedback indicating the need for more intense effort or for a different approach to the task.

The task that confronts us is no less challenging than the task that faced those Americans who dismantled segregation. To realize the possibilities presented by their achievement, we must silence, once and for all, the rumors of inferiority.

Who's Responsible? Expectations of black inferiority are communicated, consciously or unconsciously, by many whites, including teachers, managers, and those responsible for the often demeaning representations of blacks in the media. These expectations have sad consequences for many blacks, and those whose actions lead to such consequences may be held accountable for them. If the people who shape policy in the United States, from the White House to the local elementary school, do not address the problems of performance and development of blacks and other minorities, all Americans will face the consequences: instability, disharmony, and a national loss of the potential productivity of more than a quarter of the population.

However, when economic necessity and the demands of social justice compel us toward social change, those who have the most to gain from change—or the most to lose from its absence—should be responsible for pointing the way.

It is time that blacks recognize our own responsibility. When we react to the rumor of inferiority by avoiding intellectual engagement, and when we allow our children to do so, black people forfeit the opportunity for intellectual development that could extinguish the debate about our capacities, and set the stage for group progress. Blacks must hold ourselves accountable for the resulting waste of talent—and valuable time. Black people have everything to gain—in stature, self-esteem, and problem-solving capability—from a more aggressive and confident approach to intellectual competition. We must assume responsibility for our own performance and development. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Passions and Adventures

Ian Holm's name in a cast is a basic guarantee. At least something in the picture is bound to be good. The bigger the role, the bigger the guarantee. In *Dance with a Stranger* Holm plays what would once have been called the third lead, so the guarantee is better than usual. This British film deals with a pair of madly intoxicated lovers; Holm is the "extra" man, devoted to the woman, always attentive, reliable in every crisis, not the one she adores but frequently present.

Dance with a Stranger
(Samuel Goldwyn)

The Adventures of Mark Twain
(Atlantic)

The setting is London, 1954, and the first glimpse of Holm tells us a good deal. His last appearance was in *Wetherby*, where he was a successful small-town solicitor, curly-haired, creamily dressed, somewhat wearily casual. In the new film we first see him through a peephole of a private drinking club. He is neatly, almost tightly dressed. His hair is slicked down. He has a pencil-line mustache. He knows he is being inspected. His hand goes involuntarily to his tie. We're off.

This is a good introduction to a man who proves to be careful, placid only next to the frenetic, quietly loving but not tepid. He is so enamored that he is servile—a baby-sitter, financial prop, whipping boy for the woman in question, yet with dignity. Successful in his (unspecified) business, he takes his secondary position in love almost as a test of love. Only once, goaded past control, does he insist on fulfillment, but it doesn't really alter his status in this triangle.

As with all actors of range, the enjoyment of any performance by Holm is heightened by our previous experience. I saw him first in 1967 on Broadway in Pinter's *The Homecoming* as Lenny, a role he repeated in the film—not exactly a tonal preparation for his performance here or for numerous intervening parts. If you see him for the first time in *Dance with a Stranger*, you will see a whole, contradictory yet credible man. If you have seen him before, you'll see that he *always* convinces, and almost always differently.

If a review of a new film begins, as I think this one should, with comment on the third lead, then patently something is wrong with the film. The direction by Mike Newell is fluent enough visually, but he makes two big errors. First, either his ear is bad or he knew the dialogue too well and thought it was comprehensible when it wasn't. Very nearly half of it simply can't be understood. Holm is the only perfectly clear speaker throughout. Second, Newell has cast the woman—a *femme* supposedly *fatale*—with a newcomer named Miranda Richardson, who is like a waxworks figure of Madeleine Carroll touched to mobility but not to full life, devoid of charm or infectious passion, and with a voice like a squeaky door.

The story, ostensibly factual, is of a notorious murder case. The central figure was Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain. She was a divorcée, mother of two children, one of whom lived with her; she ran a drinking club above which was her apartment, above which was the bordello she also ran. Ellis is presented as a woman who knew precisely what she was doing and did it because it was the best way she knew to take care of her son and herself. She fell in love with David Blakely, a fairly well-born racing driver who was equally mad for her but only sporadically attentive. When he wasn't racing or boozing, he was often with his maternally selected fiancée instead of with Ellis. Blakely abused Ellis in virtually every way, including punch-ups. They parted more than once, yet always rejoined. Finally, driven over the edge, Ellis emptied a pistol into him one night in front of witnesses, then waited for the police.

Blakely is played by Rupert Everett, recently seen as the arrogant, sensitive homosexual schoolboy in *Another Country*. He is a lean, hawk-like, wiry actor, but his role, once established, doesn't grow. Once the characteristics are established, all he does is display them over and over again: the fire, the pathos, the desperation, the brutal selfishness. After the midway point, all we can think when he enters—no fault of Everett's—is "now for the mixture as before."

The screenplay is by Shelagh Delaney, who was famous at 19, in 1958, for *A Taste of Honey*, and for not much else since. The dialogue, as far as we can comprehend it, is good enough, but nothing is generated to answer the question: Why are we watching this story? Why was this case exhumed? Limited though she was by fact and by the inadequacy of Richardson, Delaney makes no thrust toward new vitality in a familiar erotic deadlock or toward some implication that Ellis's execution was, even under the given law, unjust.

The film's best moment is the last. We see Ellis's last letter, presumably verbatim, written in prison to Blakely's mother. As we read it, she reads it aloud, too, then signs it. Its honest muddle, its peculiar regrets, are pathetic.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dim Sum. Wayne Wang deals again with San Francisco's Chinese-Americans. Sententious cinematic overlay and ordinary story, but the people are lovely and lovable. (Reviewed 8/26/85)

The Home and the World. Satyajit Ray's gentle, perceptive treatment of Tagore's novel of change. East Bengal, 1907. (7/8/85)

Péril. French crime thriller. Luxe settings, impossible but entertaining plot, plenty of sex and enough murder. Time-passable. (9/2/85)

Wetherby. Vanessa Redgrave in Yorkshire today. A highly intelligent drama, written and directed by David Hare. If unsatisfying, it's still comparable with lesser Bergman. (8/12&19/85)

SK

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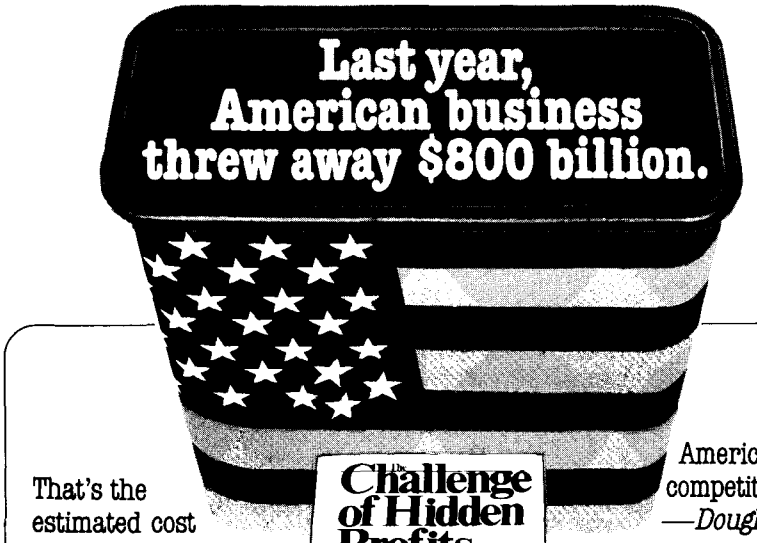
"What *is* Claymation?" you have doubtless been wondering. Well, to begin with, it's a trademark registered by Will Vinton Productions. It's the name of a process devised by Vinton for making animation films with small clay figures. Instead of a series of drawings, Vinton and associates, with a stop-motion camera, put these figures through various motions to animate them. This is not a new idea: for instance, a recent comic short about Mayor Koch used a comparable process. Vinton's difference is that he has found a way to make movement, especially changes in facial expression, much more refined than in any such work I've seen. His first feature film, *The Adventures of Mark Twain*, required (says the publicity) 130,000 figure changes for the 90 minutes of film, and took three and a half years to make. The paradoxical pleasure of the result is that one enjoys, among other things, its smoothness while appreciating the invisible immense labor that made the smoothness possible.

Another aspect of this sort of animation, as against drawings, is that three-dimensional figures in three-dimensional settings require conventional lighting. Here, too, Vinson and associates used humor and imagination.

The script, by Susan Shadburne, Vinson's wife, is distantly derived from *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, one of Mark Twain's latter-day spin-offs under commercial pressure. This one, which leans on Jules Verne, had Huck and Tom and Jim taking a ride in a balloon with a mad professor. Shadburne replaces Jim with Becky Thatcher and the professor with Mark Twain himself. The three youngsters stow away on Mark Twain's airship, which is a cross between a dirigible and a galleon. The old author says that he came in with Halley's comet (1835) and will go out with it (1910), and is now sailing to meet his departed, beloved wife up there in the comet's splendor. He reassures his three unexpected passengers that they will get back to earth safely, but en route they have adventures. En route, too, are seen "flashbacks" of some Mark Twain material, including the *Jumping Frog* and some bits of *Adam's Diary*. It's all kept pleasant enough by the appeal of the figurines and their astonishingly subtle expressions. The author's voice is well enough done by James Whitmore, and the other voices are fresh.

A small problem. Obviously the film is intended for children. But which chil-



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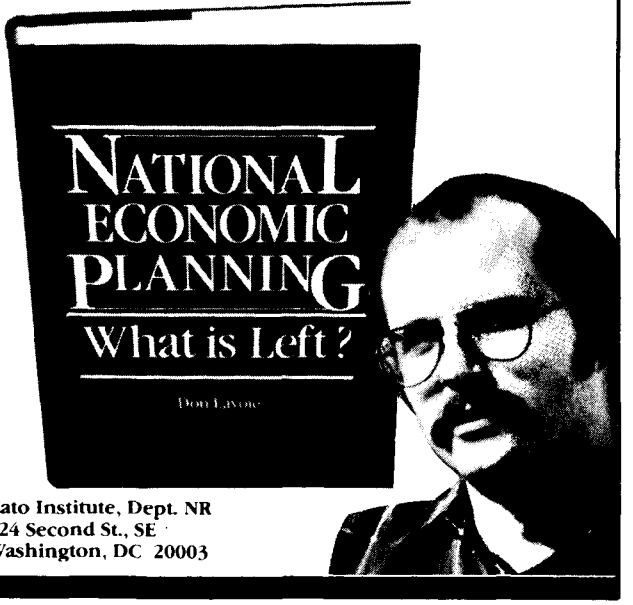

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dren? Will those who are old enough to read Mark Twain relish the condensations and appreciate being treated as children? Will those too young to have read him be interested? I don't know. But because of the skills and the amiability of the enterprise, it's worth taking a chance with any children you know. The selfish safeguard—which parents say they value—is that even if your junior companions don't respond, you'll likely have an enjoyable time.

SERVANTS AND SLAVES

Bound Over: Indentured Servitude and American Conscience by John van der Zee foreword by John Patrick Diggins

(Simon and Schuster, 382 pp., $18.95)

One gap in the historical memory of old-stock white Americans is the status of their Colonial ancestors upon arrival on these shores. Many of them, perhaps half, came over bound into servitude for a period of years, regularly four, though often more. Children between ten and 15 were bound to serve until they were 21. The servitude was usually in exchange for passage, but the term "voluntary" in association with the indenture or contract has to be used with caution. The alternative for convicts could be hanging, for armed rebels prison or execution, and for others hunger or hopelessness. Many were not consulted about their wishes. They were sentenced by courts, sold by penniless parents, and kidnapped, shanghaied, or beguiled by "crimps," unscrupulous agents of the thriving American servant trade. The transportation thus provided them, crammed below decks, often rivaled for horrors and fatalities that of African slaves in the middle passage.

Save for the important distinction that their servitude was limited (if frequently extended illegally) to a term of years, the status of the indentured white servants was essentially that of the slaves whose labors and lives they shared. They were bought by masters whom they had little part in choosing and to whom their work and the clothes on their backs entirely belonged. The master could sell or auction them off, hire them out, separate them from spouse or children, beat, whip, or brand them, and punish runaways by extending or multiplying their term of servitude. For the runaways, some colonies had the penalty of hanging. Liability of indentured servants to that punishment and to the harshest of treatment generally lacked the restraint imposed upon owners by long-term capital investment in the treatment of slaves. Short-term white servants were cheaper by half and their loss was more easily written off. In that respect they were worse off than slaves.

As John van der Zee acknowledges in his preface, the character, extent, and influence of indentured servitude have already been extensively explored and illuminated by scholarly works, notably Abbott E. Smith's *Colonists in Bondage* and Richard B. Morris's *Government and Labor in Early America*. He rightly calls attention also to Edmund S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom*, which superbly points up the ironic relationship to the rise of white democracy. The debt he owes to this prior scholarship is fully acknowledged by van der Zee, who declares that his book "would not exist" without this body of serious scholarship.

What then does the new book add to what is already known? The answer is, not very much in the way of substance. Van der Zee's contribution lies rather in his way of perceiving and presenting the experience of indentured bondage, servitude as experienced by its victims and their posterity, the emotional rather than the quantitative dimension. Unlike the new social historians, who usually deal with social aggregates and collective attitudes, van der Zee focuses on individuals and their immediate associates and families. His method is narrative, but episodic and digressive rather than linear and sequential. A novelist as well as an amateur historian on the side, van der Zee can tell a good story and make legitimate use of the historical imagination in the telling. He also has a thesis, an explanatory thesis in the historical sense, linking the American Revolution with the common experience of white bondage. Original in some respects, it deserves consideration along with many competing interpretations currently in dispute.

The subjects who sit for their portraits or tell their own stories, some 30-odd individuals in all, are mainly drawn from the bottom ranks of society with names unknown to the history books. But several are very well known indeed—Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, Tom Paine, Sam Adams, and Ben Franklin, for example. Van der Zee is eager to make his point that "there were few colonial Americans untouched by the practice of indentured servitude." Besides those "who had known, owned, been, or were descended from servants themselves," were many who had been "touched" in one way or another. Washington himself was named for an indentured servant, George Eskridge, who had become his mother's legal guardian, and Washington owed his rudimentary education to a convict servant named Hobby. Hamilton was the illegitimate son of an immigrant to the West Indies who had probably arrived in servant status.

IN EXTENDING his list of the celebrated who were "touched" with the brush of servitude, van der Zee sometimes fudges a bit. Apprenticeship was a system of trade education dating back to the Middle Ages, as he says. Ben Franklin was indentured to his brother as an apprentice at the age of 12 to learn the printer's trade. He reacted to mistreatment by his brother-master, however, much as did fugitive servants who fled intolerable bondages, and he retained "that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life." Of another luminary van der Zee writes, "It seems reasonable to assume that Jefferson's ancestors arrived under bond to somebody else," but after a few pages he is said to be "descended almost certainly from bound immigrants." And whereas at first Jefferson "appears to have had a long affair with a mulatto woman," he is later declared

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to have "failed to free his own slave mistress or their children." These and a few other manifestations of manipulated evidence aside, however, van der Zee has no difficulty in establishing his point that personal experience and horror of white servitude extended to high as well as low points on the social ladder.

OF THE lowly, authentic examples are available in great abundance and wide variety. They included castaways, renegades, misfits, drifters, convicts, and whores, kidnapped waifs, abandoned children, shanghaied drunks, desperate debtors, romantic dreamers, and hoodwinked redemptioners—all swept up in the "man rush" for cheap and tractable labor in the insatiable Colonial market. They were Scotsmen and Welshmen, Irishmen and Scotch-Irish, as well as sweepings from all over England and many thousands from the Continent. Their origins were generally lowly, but among them were honest yeomen, persecuted politicians, failed clergymen, lawyers, and writers, a few derelicts disinherited from the gentry and nobility, and one translator of Virgil convicted of lifting a fortune in books from Cambridge libraries. Whatever their origins, class, education, or occupation, they were, as indentured servants, subject to the same helpless plight. For most of them that meant being driven under threat or use of whip to the harshest labor in an uncleared, roadless, unbroken continent, and tilling the land they cleared of timber, stump, root, and rock by main strength and bare hands. All this under the arbitrary and unrestrained power of a master.

Ill-fed, poorly clothed, miserably housed, and disease-prone, great numbers did not survive their term of servitude. Those who did rarely came out better off than they were when they went in. Very few collected the promised "head right" or land grant. The only alternative for women was to exchange the bondage of labor for that of marriage, without necessarily improving their lot or lightening their labor. Some women did improve their lot and status that way. And among them the lucky, the clever, and the sturdy might flourish.

John Sullivan started with the advantage of a good education but landed in America as an indentured servant, as did Margery Brown, also from Ireland, whom he married. Of that union were to come two governors, an army general, and a naval officer. Charles Thomson landed as an impoverished castaway orphan and later became secretary of the Continental Congress and friend and correspondent of all the great figures of the American Revolution. It was Thomson who officially announced to Washington his election as president and escorted him to his inauguration. Fourteen-year-old Matthew Lyon was sold as a redemptioner in Connecticut in 1765, became a military hero of the Revolution, and was the first American to be jailed under the Alien and Sedition Act. Among contributors to the fund to pay his fine were Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. He ran for reelection to Congress from jail and remained all his days as fierce a Jeffersonian radical as they came.

These individual experiences of bondage and reaction to it make marvelous stories. Insofar as they are representative of a very common American experience, they contribute to our understanding of the fierceness with which ordinary people responded to the revolutionary slogans of liberty and freedom. They were, as van der Zee says, "people who did not speculate about John Locke or debate Rousseau," but "who could easily grasp, from experience—their parents', their neighbors', their own—what it meant to have these fresh-earned freedoms infringed upon."

How does this stand up as an explanation of the American Revolution? I think it is a viewpoint that deserves somewhat more attention than it has had. Van der Zee does not presume to claim that it replaces all other theories, but rather that it supplements them. On the other hand, there remain some unresolved paradoxes about the suggestion. The most ardent champions of revolution, republicanism, liberty, and equality came from the great Virginia planters. Yet along with this revolutionary ardor, notably in the mind of Thomas Jefferson, went an obsessive fear and contempt for the poor and dependent—most of the progeny, in other words, of the indentured immigrants. Those who had made it to personal independence were of no concern, but continued poverty and dependency made the rest a threat to liberty because they were, in Jefferson's words, "fit tools for the designs of ambition," puppets of demagogues and tyrants. Virginia had faced the menace of liberated bondsmen a century before in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 and solved it, at least to its own satisfaction, by replacing white bondsmen with black slaves. The poor and dependent were still with them, but the great bulk of them were now in chains. The free and the white could now unite behind liberty and equality based on race. Americans looked on Virginia's work and for a long time called it good. Edmund Morgan left that paradox in our lap ten years ago, and van der Zee does not pick it up.

C. VANN WOODWARD

C. Vann Woodward's *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* will be published next spring by Louisiana State University Press.

INDOCHINA MON AMOUR

The Lover
by Marguerite Duras

(Pantheon, 117 pp., $11.95)

The grand *monstres* of French literary culture—Jean-Paul Sartre, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan—are all dead. Marxism and the *nouveau roman* have, almost inevitably, lost their former luster. French literary vedettes like Philippe Sollers—his best-selling *Femmes* is to be made into a new film by Godard—and Nathalie Sarraute have jumped ship, and are writing highly accessible autobiographical novels. And the absolute reigning queen of the new Parisian literary life, in which readable novels have become suddenly acceptable, is Marguerite Duras.

Her autobiographical novel *L'Amant* (*The Lover*) won last year's Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary

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prize, and has sold over 700,000 copies; it is now a best seller in the United States, too. Duras also has been in the spotlight this season because of the publication of *La douleur* (*The Sorrow*), a more straightforward account of her experiences in the French resistance in Paris at the end of World War II. (She says she found the four brief fragments contained in the book in a cupboard in her country house.) The book's subject is heroism, but it also sheds considerable light on the obsessions that Duras has dealt with much more obscurely in her other work. For years one had heard in French literary circles about the "Duras problem"—that one of her assignments in the resistance had been to become more or less the girlfriend of a French collaborator, whom she then turned in, and who was subsequently executed. In *La douleur* she explicitly discusses the "Rabier incident"; she also reveals that she ordered another collaborator to be tortured, and had sexual longings for a third collaborator on the eve of his execution.

IN THE case of Duras, born Marguerite Donnadieu in 1914 in Saigon, there are many different pieces of the puzzle to be sorted out. She is an odd hybrid of poetry and skewed politics. Most of her 15 novels—*The Ravishing of Lol V. Stein*, *Moderato Cantabile*, and her own favorite (she considers it a great 20th-century classic), *The Vice-Consul*—have been highly stylized, moody *nouveaux romans*. Yet there is another side to her, an intensely political side, that may be found, for example, in her script for Alain Resnais's film *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, and in *La douleur*.

From the outside, Duras has always very much seemed a literary star, but it appears that during the last decade she felt her work neglected. In the early 1980s both she and her current companion, Yann Andréa, a writer in his 30s, became reclusive, depressive alcoholics. Eventually she signed into the American hospital in Neuilly-sur-Seine for a detoxification program. Andréa also took the cure; *M.D.*, his demonic account of their joint descent into an alcoholic hell, was published in 1983. During her shaky recuperative period, Duras started *The Lover*. It was conceived as a text to accompany a book of photographs she wished to publish of her early life in Indochina, and written in a speedy three months. In the novel a Chinese man and an adolescent

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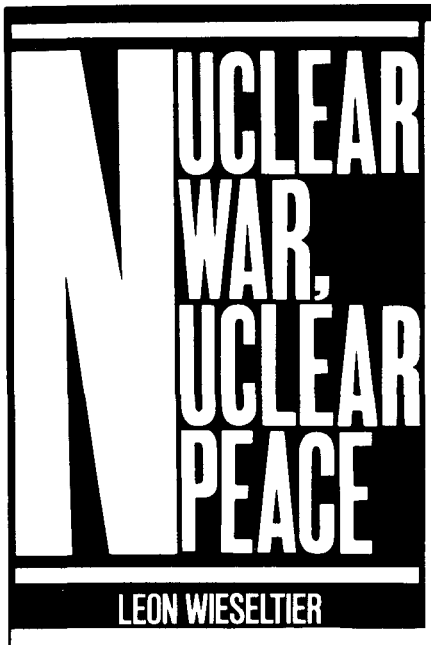

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French girl conduct a torrid liaison for a year and a half, to the shock of local French colonials. The man picks her up in his limousine every afternoon after school, and she sports a bunch of expensive new clothes. The affair ends because the man's father insists that his son marry a Chinese girl. The narrator leaves for Paris, for the Sorbonne.

THOUGH *The Lover* has the familiar elements of Duras's style—displaced, disjointed eroticism; hypnotically repeated incantations about death and eternity; and the skilled use of a classically French intense confessional style, all done in short takes in a nonchronological sequence—it is unusually accessible. Duras has reworked the same material about her family and her adolescence that she used in one of her earliest novels, *The Sea Wall*, published in 1950. The family is ramshackle French colonial. The widowed mother is a schoolteacher in a half-caste school. She instills in her daughter and two sons a sense of grandeur about their genteel poverty: a houseboy serves them skimpy dinners, a loyal French maid sews for the adolescent daughter badly cut dresses with smocking in the wrong places. The mother's enterprises invariably fail; her schemes to develop rice paddies in the south are wrecked because the locals have given her the wrong information. Still, there is enough money for the family restlessly to go back and forth to France.

The book is presented as a piece of autobiography, but Duras has always liked manipulating myths. Her portrait of the ravaged little woman—of the frail-shouldered, sexually perverse, tiny white girl in the thin silk dress, the man's fedora, the glittering paste high heels, forced in effect to whore for her beloved and despised family—is very reminiscent of that other teenage *maudite*, Edith Piaf. Here is *la petite môme en Indochine*. Indeed, the way Duras at 71 seems suddenly to have seduced all of France—the public accounts of the gamine and her sexually abused childhood, of her near-death from alcohol, the almost national celebration of the doomed amours of her past and of her new life-saving young lover—all evoke the way it was with Piaf. "The little sparrow," however, really did have a beat-up childhood. In the case of Duras, who went on to study law at the Sorbonne, reality seems to have been more complicated.

A tiny white girl is despoiled in the heat of Saigon. The Chinese man "does it" to her again and again, only a thin window blind separating them from the teeming Chinese masses just outside. Meanwhile, the Chinese's father is lying on an iron cot in a room in another town, counting his millions and smoking opium: this corrupt evil old man, who steals from the poor, has the nerve to prevent his son from marrying the poor little French girl, who needs money to help her widowed mother and two brothers, thus condemning her to permanent ruin. She becomes known as the "little white whore from Sadec." The novel's sotto voce message, in short, is pure French colonial: rather oddly xenophobic, almost as though the author was sitting in a Loire kitchen, telling the local concierge the lurid details of what it was like to have been the orphaned *môme* of France *outremer* in those days and nights when France still possessed its empire in Indochina.

DURAS WANTS to have it both ways. As a former mainstay of the French left she would be the first to call the next fellow "raciste," but she adroitly knows just how most of her French readers will respond to her cautionary tale of sex in the Orient. The narrator's mother is quite symbolic of how the average French perceived their role in Indochina. The widowed schoolteacher tries to bring French culture to unappreciative half-castes, but later she is exploited by unscrupulous locals who sell her bad land in the south for her rice paddies, while Indian moneylenders harass her. Now, Duras can be an exceedingly politically precise writer. Why, then, are the Chinese, the locals, the Indians always perceived as the bad guys with the money? Were the French really the exploited in Indochina? What of the hunger riots of 1930, for example, which were savagely punished by the French? What of the almost slave labor recruited by the French for the rubber plantations in Cochin China? Just *who* was meant to work mother's rice paddies? Anyway, in 1930 the antiwhites were Ho Chi Minh's young revolutionaries, not Chinese millionaires.

One wonders how France's imperial colonialism organized itself inside the head of the young Marguerite Duras, of the singularly intelligent young woman firmly preparing herself for her departure for the Sorbonne and her true future in France. I imagine her as a lonely

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young girl in Saigon, conjuring up images of France through her one real link to the mother country—the marvelous libraries the French installed as a monument to French culture in every outpost of their colonial empire. I see this troubled, imaginative Creole girl (Duras's own label for herself) rummaging through French literature, rolling off the tip of her tongue, in her best invented Paris accent, grand incantatory phrases—perhaps a touch of Corneille: *Rome qui t'a vu naître, et que ton coeur adore!*—mixing centuries, lofty ideals, and notions of place and country with her own desire. Once in France, she was to Frenchify herself in the handy manner used by those who needed to gain a quick sense of belonging there—through the French Communist Party. (She was expelled from it in 1950.) The trouble with the French is that so few of them feel that they really *are* French.

IN *The Lover* the sexual exotic, really, is the French girl, not the man. In the important first seduction scene she is in control. (She also lusts for her classmate Hélène, whom she likes to imagine in a ménage à trois.) The 15-year-old narrator commands the horrified man to seduce her: "Treat me like you treat other women." But would a Chinese millionaire's son, who had lived in Paris and known many French women, be weeping and mewling like a stuck pig at the thought of making love to a sexy French girl he had picked up? Who exactly is this lover? Duras's talent for myth may be as active in her account of her sexual history as in her account of France's colonial history. Speculating on the subject, Michel Tournier observed in a review of *The Lover* that Duras has the half-caste features found in Chengdu, and concluded that it was her mother who had the affair with the Chinese man. "And so this short, harrowing novel should have been entitled not *The Lover* but *The Father*. A father who is hated because he is yellow, because he is compromising to the mother, who has 'fallen,' and compromising to the daughter, who carries on her Eurasian face the shame of her origin." My own hunch is that the mysterious Chinese lover stands for Duras's brother, that this is a tale of incest disguised as a tale of miscegenation. Many passages in the novel suddenly make emotional sense. ("I asked him to do it again and again. And he did it in the unctuousness of blood. And it really was unto death. . . .") And this would explain why, after the narrator leaves for Paris, she receives only one short letter in ten years from her adored brother: an oblique message that he is all right. And, why, in the family scenes, when the Chinese takes the narrator and her brothers out dancing, he seems to her, suddenly, so powerless and nonexistent. During the Japanese occupation of Indochina, in 1942, the brother dies of pneumonia.

Whether Tournier is right and the lover is the father, or my hunch is more on the mark and he is the brother, or whether he is some combination of all these figures, clearly this may not be the straightforward piece of erotic autobiography that Duras would have us believe. Indeed, Tournier's explanation could help to account for the strange mixture of erotic attraction and xenophobic repulsion toward "others" in all of Duras's work. According to Tournier, Duras has said in an interview that in the detoxification clinic she hallucinated that a Chinese man was persecuting her. There is a truly mad scene in the novel about purification, in which the mother suspects the daughter's affair, strips and locks her in her room, and, while the older brother is outside, egging her on, she beats the girl: "[she] . . . comes to me and smells my body, my underwear, says she can smell the Chinese's scent, goes even further, looks for the suspect stains on my underwear, and shouts, for the whole town to hear, that her daughter's a prostitute. . . ."

AT THE END of the book Duras describes the Chinese man—or whomever he might symbolize—visiting the narrator many years later in Paris. It is a common wish, that one's first love will return, pledging undying *amour*. More subliminally perhaps, Duras may be mixing a private fantasy with a public fantasy. The return of the lover to Duras may stand for France's dream that its lost Indochina will be restored, and will eschew its marriage to "the other Chinese woman."

> It must have been a long time before [the Chinese man] was able . . . to give [his Chinese wife] the heir to their fortunes. The memory of the little white girl must have been there. . . . For a long time she must have remained the queen of his desire, his personal link with . . . the immensity of tenderness. . . .

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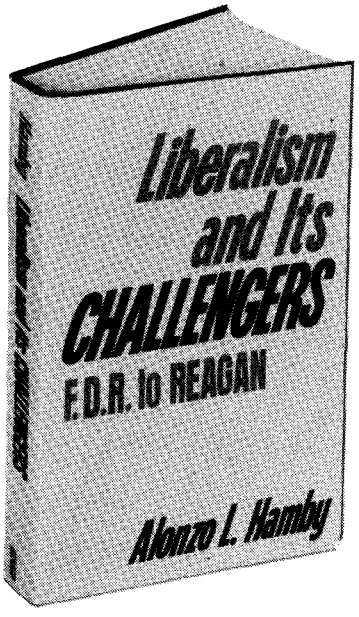

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Here, with her skilled use of incantation, Duras magnificently fuses the Chinese man, her son (the child is born shortly before the novel ends), her adored dead brother, France, and its lost colonial empire:

> And with the trembling, suddenly, she heard again the voice of China. He knew she'd begun writing books, he'd heard about it through her mother whom he'd *met again in Saigon. And about her* younger brother, and he'd been grieved for her. Then he didn't know what to say. And then he told her. Told her that it was as before, that he still loved her, he could never stop loving her, that he'd love her until death.

UNFORTUNATELY, the political echoes of *The Lover*, its shrewd mingling of erotic experience and racist nostalgia, do not end there. Duras has saddled the novel with a highly inflammatory subplot that can't quite be ignored, and which sheds light upon both *La douleur* and *Hiroshima*. At one point in the narrative Duras abruptly turns to matters in France during the German occupation. The narrator's hated older brother has become a small-potatoes collaborator. The two siblings are quarreling over their mother's money. The narrator's husband has been deported. And she has become a fond friend of Betty Fernandez, the wife of Ramon Fernandez, a French writer and collaborator who had literary "at homes" during the German occupation. Suddenly—as in *Hiroshima*—Duras mixes real history into the poetic haze: "Once Drieu la Rochelle was there. . . . Maybe Brasillach. . . . Sartre never came." And, in almost a throwaway sentence, Duras casually says:

> . . . collaborators, the Fernandezes were. And I, two years after the war, I was a member of the Communist Party. . . . The two things are the same, the same lack of judgment, the same superstition if you like, that consists in believing in a political solution to the personal problem.

The Fernandezes are described as rather charming, cultivated sophisticates, and as loyal friends.

> Ramon Fernandez used to talk about Balzac. He spoke with a knowledge that's almost completely forgotten . . . as if he himself had once tried to be Balzac. He had a sublime courtesy. . . . He was sincere. It was always a joy to meet him in the street. . . .

The collaborator is portrayed as the sincere, courtly preserver of French tradition, as the guardian of Balzac. Amazing, the way Duras suddenly becomes a party to the worst clichés of *la vieille France*.

The fact of the matter is that Drieu la Rochelle and Brasillach were France's two most famous literary fascists. They actively worked with the Gestapo. At the end of the war Drieu la Rochelle killed himself; Brasillach was executed in France's most famous trial of collaborationist intellectuals. Along with him were executed Georges Suarez and Maurice Bunau-Varilla, the owner of *Matin*, a newspaper publisher who was known for his fancy parties for the Gestapo. (He liked flowers molded in the shape of a swastika as a table centerpiece.)

Despite the blurred pale violet print of the young author on the cover of *The Lover*, presumably the publisher's indication that this is a misty erotic tale, there is nothing misty about Duras's explicit references to men like Brasillach and Drieu la Rochelle. Was being a collaborator really the same as being in the resistance? Duras may be abusing the privilege of the writer; of course she may juxtapose and rearrange the bits and pieces of her erotic life as she pleases, but perhaps not to the extent of distorting and displacing moral meanings and historical facts. To be sure, one might argue that the execution of Brasillach was too vengeful, that too many abuses were committed in France at the war's end. But that is not Duras's point. She is espousing, rather, a notion that enjoyed a certain amount of literary popularity in Europe in the 1960s—that everything is relative, that there are legitimate standpoints from which victims and aggressors may be viewed as equals.

DURAS recently vented her spleen against Sartre on French television. She said that he was not a writer. Well, perhaps he won't be best remembered for his novels, if that was her implication. Still, tipping the balance against Sartre and his world in favor of Brasillach, Drieu la Rochelle, and their world is outrageous. The real question for France, which lost nearly two million people in World War II, remains not who resisted—it is not human to demand that others risk their lives, and anyway there were many forms of resisting—but who collaborated. And the problem for French literary culture is that so many of its fine stylists were ac-

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tive French fascists. What Sartre, Camus, and the others of their circle provided for France in the immediate postwar period—despite their many quarrels, despite their misjudgments about Marxism—was a defense against a beautifully styled French prose that had been used in the service of atrocity. Thus Sartre's emphasis on plain prose was deliberate. So, too, was his philosophy; existentialism's controlling idea—that one is the sum of one's acts, that words only have power when attached to an act—was an essential moral medicine for France. As the only major power to have been occupied by the Germans, with its culture in shreds, France badly needed a vision by which to recoup its lost moral and literary self-esteem.

BUT NOW Duras offers to a new generation a view of writers like Brasillach and Drieu la Rochelle as elegant, thoughtful romantics. Her subtle comparison of occupied France to the body of an innocent raped child is another twisted rewriting of history. (To be sure, these matters are in vogue now, part of the French appetite for *retro*; the biggest best seller in France is Regine Deforge's *Gone with the Wind* of the resistance: *La Bicyclette bleue*, a two-volume saga with a Joan of Arc heroine, semi-hard pornographic sex, scenes of extraordinary sadism, and figures of every political hue.) Appearing at a time in its country's history when explosive trials concerning the collaboration of French officials with the Gestapo are about to begin, and when the country is witnessing a new upsurge of racism, the subtle subplots of *The Lover*—the poor French girl defiled by rich Orientals, the sincere collaborators who are the true defenders of Balzac—are more than a little troubling. And in *La douleur* Duras also describes the collaborator she betrays as a man whose true desire was to own a bookstore of rare books. (She seems fond of this link between collaboration and the love of fine literature.) In June the popular new weekly *L'Evenément du Jeudi* published a series of letters, released from government archives, written by Frenchmen to Pétain to save Jewish lives. It was striking how many spoke to Pétain in his own language: they stressed that Jews weren't to be considered enemies of France because they did not defile the purity of French culture, despite their accident of birth. Unlike the Germans, the French were not concerned with purity of blood, but with purity of culture. That is how their fascist intellectuals rationalized themselves as the true saviors of France.

DURAS, of course, was in the resistance. Indeed, she saved Mitterrand's life—he is "Morland" in *La douleur*. He was a close friend of Duras's husband, "Robert L." This book is her expiation not for crimes committed, but for her own sadomasochistic impulses and obsessive feelings of guilt for having participated in the punishment of collaborators. In a note at the beginning of one of the sections of *La douleur*, she calls these extraordinary pages her *textes sacrés*; they are about the things closest to her, the hidden recesses of her homely, less grandiose, everyday heart. We don't need Duras's chattering on television about her eternal love for her Chinese lover to understand that her deported husband mattered to her: her description of rushing through Paris to grill his friends who had returned from the same camp to find out whether he and his sister might still be alive is devastating. Robert finally was located by fellow members of the French resistance, dying and delirious in Dachau; the sister was found in Ravensbrück. She dies on the way home; he is saved, but is returned to Duras almost a living cadaver. Her description of not being allowed to feed him the *clafoutis* she had baked for him because his stomach had so shrunk—survivors were dying from being fed too quickly—is shattering. The husband looks at the food being withheld from him; sometimes he steals scraps. The denial is a repetition of what he suffered in the concentration camp, but it is the only way his life can be saved.

Duras may perceive herself as a rebel, an outsider, a Creole, but her work is really rather exemplary. It is a reflection of the contradictions of French consciousness, of its noble and its ignoble reality. This is one of the reasons she remains an interesting and important writer. But again, by way of being such a representative writer, Duras can have it both ways. Consider *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, made in 1960. It was unusual because it was the first French film, with one minor exception, to mention World War II. (*The Sorrow and the Pity* wasn't made until 1970.) Touted as being a universalist antiwar film, which it was not, the film deals with French feel-

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ings of guilt. But then there comes a twist. There are no French males, no soldiers, in *Hiroshima*. The French understandably didn't wish to recall World War II, or Algeria, or Indochina, and so Duras created a film about the war with a female heroine.

And then there came still a further twist. Duras managed to equate the suffering of the Japanese after the bomb with the suffering of the French during the occupation. In this upside-down thinking, France becomes an imaginary wasteland, filled with carnage. By expropriating Hiroshima's tragedy, Duras released her country from the unpleasant memory of having submitted to the Germans. Moreover, by a further involution, since the United States was guilty of the senseless destruction of Hiroshima and yet helped to liberate France, Duras gave the French a chance to direct their anger outward; anti-Americanism in de Gaulle's France was at a peak. The only foreigners to escape blame, in fact, are the Germans. All this was in 1960. Ten years later *The Sorrow and the Pity* gave evidence of the country's growing ability to examine its past; and now even grander and more somber evidence comes with Claude Lanzmann's nine-hour film about the Holocaust that has opened in Paris. *La douleur* continues to make the subject of the German occupation more explicit, which is badly needed by the French.

Duras's writing has real power. Her strength is in her images, in the music of her prose. Though she probably wouldn't see herself this way, this daughter of *outremer* is, for better and for worse, her country's most successful nationalist writer. And somewhat like Céline, though not nearly of his genius, Duras seems to have absorbed into her consciousness her country's profound xenophobia, which in her love-hate relation to France she speaks for even as she ceaselessly attempts to overcome it, as she gets beneath the French skin with her imperfect, luminous art.

BARBARA PROBST SOLOMON

Barbara Probst Solomon is the author of *Arriving Where We Started* (Harper & Row) and *Short Flights* (Viking).

A CRISIS GROWS IN BROOKLYN

Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism by Jonathan Rieder

(Harvard University Press, 290 pp., $22.50)

Jonathan Rieder's portrait of the people of Canarsie is an informative insider's account of white ethnic reaction to the pressures of urban change. The Brooklyn community of working- and middle-class Jews and Italians attracted national attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s when some of the ugliest conflicts in the country over the issues of residential integration, busing, and urban crime erupted in its midst. When 10,000 students were kept from school during a white antibusing boycott in the fall of 1972, *The New York Times* wrote, "The shameful situation in Canarsie illustrates the forces of unreason sweeping over the city and nation," and hoped that "the arrival of new [black] pupils can be turned into a friendly occasion rather than a shameful blocking of the schoolhouse door à la Little Rock." Rieder presents an anatomy of racism and bitter reaction, of fear and anger, of doubt and resignation. Canarsie's residents come vividly to life in this superb ethnography as Rieder, who lived in Brooklyn during nearly two years of field research for the book, renders their voices in readable prose.

There is evidence for all of the clichés of the conventional (dare I say elite?) wisdom concerning the "silent majority" here. An Italian plumber sees nobility in his forebears' struggle against poverty, but only depravity in the desperate lives of the contemporary black poor. The Catholic wife of a municipal employee complains that "the blacks have ten kids to a family," seeing "their overpopulation" as the problem. An Orthodox Jewish man laments what has become "a degenerate society," in which criminals "kill people like they would kill a fly." In response to the airing of *Roots*, a woman declares that ". . . if they keep shoving that stuff down our throats there's never going to be peace. . . . I expect this summer the blacks will be out there on the streets with axes to cut off white feet."

We learn of an organization among Italian youths called SPONGE (Society for the Prevention of Niggers Getting Everything), of the systematic intimidation of neighbors who consider selling their homes to blacks, and of firebombs thrown at the homes of those black families brave enough to challenge the community's ethnic purity. A Jewish member of a backlash group explains, "Well, I'm against violence, but they are jeopardizing my home and my children, and I will bomb to protect them." We enter the world of antibusing activism, the epitome of Canarsie's collective resistance to the advancing liberal reforms. Rieder recalls the genesis of the "Canarsie Schools for Canarsie Children" boycott campaign and provides frightfully detailed accounts of "howling," "fiendish," "ghoulish" mobs of white parents, determined to let the black students and the rest of the world know of their displeasure at "forced busing." We are not spared the violent, bloody details, nor the zeal with which young Canarsie residents carried out their assignments. One young Italian tough laughingly announces, "I hate niggers. I've been fighting them all my life. I enjoy it."

While Rieder skillfully depicts the bigotry, ignorance, and prejudice of this troubled neighborhood, he is equally adroit at capturing the palpable fear, acute sense of injustice, and moral ambivalence that plague many Canarsie whites. A trucker tells of having defecated in his pants when accosted by knife-wielding black youths. Neighbors, gathered to discuss street crime, "occasionally tried to best each other in duels of grotesque incidents" that they had witnessed, including the burning alive of a dispenser of tokens in a subway station. Elderly residents tell of feeling imprisoned in their own homes. Devout Jews recount being beaten by muggers on their way to synagogue when, for religious reasons, they never

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carried money on their person. An undercover policeman whose job it is to pose as a likely mugging victim recalls that of the more than 100 incidents in which he has been involved, only one of the perpetrators was white.

THOSE WHO had grown up in Brownsville, or moved to Canarsie after watching their former neighborhoods in East New York or East Flatbush succumb to racial integration and subsequent decay, explain that they have nowhere else to run, that it is here in Canarsie that they must make their stand. Hard-working people of limited means and proud, family-oriented traditions look on the massive welfare dependency of fatherless black families with bewilderment and disdain. Italian workers of quite modest incomes—and a precarious toehold in the American middle class—vent their sense of outrage at being lumped together with slaveholding whites of the previous century, as racist victimizers of blacks. One man explains: "They made *us* dig the [subway] tunnels. When the earth caved in, it was always one of the Italians who died, nobody of consequence! We were slaves."

Indeed, as Rieder perceptively notes when discussing white outrage at a government-mandated "ethnic" census that made no distinction among European nationality groups: "The HEW form seemed to relegate all whites to a residual category of otherness and to reserve the dignity of a name for groups officially designated as deprived." One ethnically conscious man exclaims: "What the hell does 'white' mean?" It becomes clear why demands for bilingual education, public recognition of black culture, quotas, reparations, open enrollment, and leniency for urban rioters so deeply offended these people's sense of justice. With similar, though not identical, grievances they had no standing to make comparable claims, and were denounced as "racists" if they balked at paying (with their homes and children, as they saw it) for the claims being ever more aggressively pressed by blacks.

What emerges is a complex, nuanced picture of northern urban racial reaction among the Canarsie ethnics. Some of the residents, especially those conservative Italians among whom Joe McCarthy remains a hero, are without doubt unreconstructed racists using the perils of the ghetto as an excuse for their bigotry. But others, especially those liberal Jews with backgrounds in radical politics and the civil rights movement, are greatly troubled by the reaction that circumstance has forced upon them. Many search for a vocabulary in which to express their legitimate concerns without running afoul of their deeply ingrained sense of social justice, or their antagonism to stereotypes and racial prejudice.

Rieder argues that the better educated are more likely to succeed at the delicate task of voicing concern about the behavior of "bad blacks," while continuing to convey a willingness to live in peace with "good blacks." Yet this distinction is only of theoretical value in those situations where it is impossible to know what "kind of black" one is dealing with. Similarly, it does blacks who encounter the bitter reaction of white Canarsie residents little good to know that some of them want desperately to be able to live harmoniously with decent neighbors regardless of race. Among people who resist school integration and open housing, often vociferously and violently, it is hard to distinguish unreconstructed racists from merely anguished victims of circumstance. For blacks experiencing Canarsie's rage, the distinction between "good whites" and "bad whites," between whites whose fears deserve to be taken seriously in the interest of living together in peace and those who would resist integration no matter what, is also of little practical value.

THIS TOUCHES on the principal problem with Rieder's book—the absence of any serious effort to treat the black side of this great divide. The central characters of the racial drama remain offstage; we see them only through the eyes of Rieder's whites. Because of his decision to focus exclusively on white perceptions, values, and fears, he misses a crucial point—the extent to which each group's anticipation of the "bad" behavior of the other creates self-fulfilling prophecies. In the close quarters of urban living, where peoples of vastly different cultures and norms are brought cheek by jowl, peaceful cohabitation depends upon the willingness of each group to afford a modicum of deference and respect to the different traditions of the others. As Rieder makes clear, though this is not his purpose, it is because of such mutual respect and deference that the Jewish and Italian cohab-

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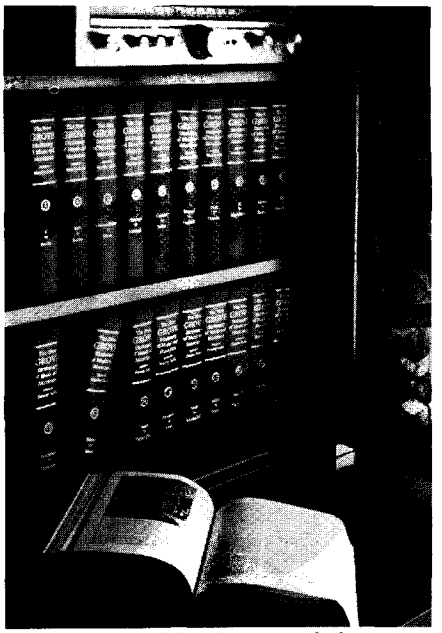

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itants of white Canarsie are able to live together despite vast differences of tradition between the two communities.

But the willingness to defer to the sensibilities of others is a reciprocal and delicate balance, likely to be destroyed if either party loses faith in the cooperation of the other. Rieder describes well the sense of violation felt by whites who encounter in their shared public spaces the loud radios and foul language of black and Hispanic youths. He touches not at all, though, on the anger evoked in the young black at being called "nigger," an anger which makes that young man less likely to respect the sensitivities of those he sees as racists. As a result, Rieder fails to convey a full sense of the tragedy of urban race relations in communities like Canarsie. Whites are hardened in their resistance to integration by the offensive behavior of blacks, while blacks perceive the fierce resistance to integration as indication that, no matter what they do, the racist whites will never accept them. Add to this drama of mutually reinforcing negative perceptions the fact that there really were some irreducibly hostile blacks and irremediably racist whites on either side of the chasm, and one begins to understand how intractable, as well as tragic, this conflict is.

BUT, OF COURSE, it is not simply perceptions, but the stark realities of the ghetto, that cause Canarsie residents to view blacks with suspicion. White racism, however virulent and unreasoning, cannot plausibly be held accountable for the drug addiction, street prostitution, family breakdown, and criminality that confronted the people of Canarsie daily. As Rieder puts it, "The seamy aspects of ghetto life were so vivid that they overwhelmed the ability of whites to note all the other aspects that did not conform to the stereotypes." Nor can one dismiss the affront to white ethnics' sense of morality that was caused by the apparent unwillingness of those in authority to condemn what seemed to them to be inexcusable behavior.

To people who had tried to live by the rules as they understood them, it seemed unfair that blacks could breach those rules without sanction. A housewife complains: "You see, we did what we *had* to. We worked hard and lived right. It's not right that they think they can do what they *want* to." Rieder, lamenting the fact that Canarsians, themselves descended from poor minorities, had so little empathy for their black neighbors, notes,

> *Unfortunately, physical closeness to* blacks widened the moral and social chasm between them. The legendary sacrifices of Jewish and Italian immigrants nourished contempt for poor blacks, who seemingly failed to bust their chops as had the forebears of the whites.

But where life among ghetto blacks evoked contempt among many whites of Canarsie, it evoked sympathy and pity in the liberal establishment of the Democratic Party. To Canarsians, as Rieder amply demonstrates, liberals, epitomized by the Lindsay mayoral administration locally and the McGovern presidential candidacy nationally, had sided with the blacks. On issues like school desegregation, affirmative action, law and order, and social welfare policy it seemed to them that liberal Democrats no longer represented their views. Moreover, they were made to feel it was illegitimate to hold these views. Increasingly, those identifying themselves with the forces of conscience in American political life came to give less credence to the values and concerns of white working-class ethnics in places like Canarsie. In many "progressive" minds these people were lumped together with Southern segregationists as reactionaries who stood in the way of the attainment of racial justice.

Yet the fears and the anxieties of the Canarsians rest on much sounder moral ground than did those of Southern whites resistant to change. When the civil rights movement turned northward in the mid-1960s, it encountered a kind of resistance that should have been usefully distinguished from that which had just been overcome in the South. But neither the leaders of the movement nor their liberal white allies within the Democratic Party were capable of making such distinctions. This, it can be fairly said in retrospect, was a monumental error. The result, Rieder suggests, was a permanent alienation from the party of this vital component of the New Deal coalition, an alienation that continues to haunt the Democrats to this day.

GLENN C. LOURY

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THE POWER OF TASTE

Report from the Besieged City and Other Poems
by Zbigniew Herbert
translated with an introduction and notes
by John Carpenter and Bogdana Carpenter
(The Ecco Press, 82 pp., $12.50)

Barbarian in the Garden
by Zbigniew Herbert
translated by Michael March
and Jaroslaw Anders
(Carcanet, 180 pp., $14.95)

The title *Report from the Besieged City* could, in fact, stand above each and every poem of Zbigniew Herbert, who at 61 is undoubtedly the most admired and respected poet now living in Poland. The image of a city under siege, one of the several symbols that constantly recur in his work, has a historic poignancy that makes it much more than just a figure of speech. In September 1939, as a 15-year-old, Herbert experienced the annexation of his hometown, the ancient city of Lwow, by the Soviet Union. After the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact turned sour, the city was seized by the Nazis, and then, at the end of the war, it was recaptured by the Soviets to retain it within the new borders of their empire. Young Herbert had to move to central Poland, but for him the state of siege continued. Now it was the entire country under the siege of "barbarians," the supporters of the new totalitarian order.

The final, unequivocal formulation of this crucial symbol came in the months of martial law, in the poem that lent its title to Herbert's latest collection. In retrospect, his entire work to date appears as a continuous "report from the besieged city." The poet identifies himself as a chronicler of the defense carried out against barbarians' ever-present threat:

> Too old to carry arms and fight like the others—
> they graciously gave me the inferior role
> of chronicler
> I record—I don't know for whom—the history of the siege
> I am supposed to be exact but I don't know when the invasion began
> two hundred years ago in December in September perhaps yesterday at dawn
> everyone here suffers from a loss of the sense of time

But, speaking of the symbolic rule of titles, it is very fortunate that almost simultaneously with *Report* another book by Herbert came out in English translation—his collection of essays titled *Barbarian in the Garden*. At first sight, there seems to be a contradiction here: the chronicler of the defense against the barbarians now portrays himself as one of them. It is, in fact, this deliberate contradiction that makes Herbert's poetic voice unique and meaningful. The fundamental paradox of his work is that his literary persona is both "the chronicler of the siege" and "the barbarian," someone who sticks, against all odds, to the traditional values and someone who has been forcibly disinherited of them. Like other defenders of the symbolic city, he doesn't want to be forced out. But sometimes he would welcome a little vacation abroad—with a reentry visa, to be sure. The trouble is, once he finally enters the quiet and manicured garden of the outer world, he is not able to identify himself with it. Combating the barbarians has had such an effect on him that he now seems to be a barbarian himself.

As everything in Herbert, this sense of incurable duality has its roots in a personal experience. *Barbarian in the Garden* appeared in Poland in 1962, after Herbert had made his very first trip to the West. Instead of "trip," one should rather say "pilgrimage." The poet had behind him several years of misery under Stalinism, when he was one of very

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few intransigent intellectuals who rejected the temptation to join the new order; as a consequence, he was reduced to poverty and isolation. A brilliant mind, thoroughly educated in art history and philosophy, he had to hold a variety of bizarre and pitifully paid jobs—such as a designer of protective wear in something called the Bureau of Research and Projects of the Peat Industry—in order to make ends meet.

Absent by his own choice from official literary life, he wrote "for his desk drawer." The breakthrough came in 1956 when, in the wake of political and cultural thaw, his first book of poems was published, followed by the next two in 1957 and 1961. The Western translations and literary awards that ensued provided Herbert with a chance to meet face-to-face with the world of culture he had known only from books and reproductions. Some of the effects of that confrontation are presented in his famous poem "Mona Lisa" (translated, in the 1968 Penguin edition of *Selected Poems*, by Peter Dale Scott), in which the Eastern European visitor finally, after many years of separation by "mountain frontiers" and "barbed wire of rivers," faces the legendary painting. His initial sense of triumph (he repeats: "so I'm here / you see I'm here / I hadn't a hope / but I'm here") soon evaporates. He realizes that another frontier, a psychological one, still sets apart his 20th-century Eastern European experience and the world of the Western cultural past:

between the blackness of her back
and the first tree of my life

lies a sword
a melted precipice

THE NOTION of frontier or separation also accounts for the peculiar perspective of Herbert's essays. I don't mean by this that he has to relate his impressions of Italy and France to the not very well-traveled Polish reader of the early 1960s and thus is forced, for example, to explain in detail what a pizza is. More important, Herbert himself approaches the heritage of Western culture with a persistent sense of inner split: he looks at it with the eye of a legitimate heir and, at the same time, with the eye of someone who has been—illegally, but irrevocably—deprived of his heritage. After visiting the cave paintings at Lascaux, he confesses: "Never before had I felt a stronger or more reassuring conviction: I am a citizen of the earth, an inheritor not only of the Greeks and Romans but of almost the whole of infinity."

But such moments of uninhibited euphoria are rare. More typical are the instances when the perspectives of the "inheritor" and the "barbarian" merge: when, for example, Herbert tells the story of the destruction of the Templar order as if he were describing the atmosphere of the Moscow show trials in the 1930s. In such cases it is evident that he is concerned not merely with "the eternity of Piero della Francesca" and "how stone is laid upon stone in a Gothic cathedral," but also with the question of what all those triumphs of Mediterranean culture mean for a modern "barbarian" who, in his own part of the world, faces a methodical extermination of the basic values of civilization.

What is exceptional about Herbert is not the mere realization of that discrepancy but the fact that he is far from blaming culture and civilization for what has happened to them in our century. On the contrary, his respect for the common "heritage" of the Western cultural past never diminishes. He stubbornly reiterates that even though the "heritage" seems to be irreversibly lost the "disinherited" must claim their rights to it. This is, in fact, their only chance not to forget what is the difference between them and the true barbarians. Twenty years after the first Polish publication of *Barbarian in the Garden*, this particular motif has returned with striking force in Herbert's recent poetry, which, among other meanings, can be read as quite a direct commentary on the nature of totalitarianism and art's relation to it. I have in mind, in particular, the splendid poem "The Power of Taste," which offers a surprisingly simple explanation of Herbert's own steadfastness during the years of Stalinism:

It didn't require great character at all
our refusal disagreement and resistance
we had a shred of necessary courage
but fundamentally it was a matter of taste
Yes taste
in which there are fibers of soul the cartilage of conscience

Who knows if we had been better and
more attractively tempted
sent rose-skinned women thin as a wafer
or fantastic creatures from the paintings of
Hieronymus Bosch
but what kind of hell was there at this time
a wet pit the murderers' alley the barrack
called a palace of justice. . . .

So aesthetics can be helpful in life
one should not neglect the study of beauty

Before we declare our consent we must
carefully examine
the shape of the architecture the rhythm
of the drums and pipes
official colors the despicable ritual of
funerals. . . .

All this is said by a defender of the City who is back within its walls: after another prolonged stay in the West, Herbert returned to Poland in the beginning of 1981 eventually to experience both the harsh reality of martial law and the tremendous upsurge of his own popularity among Polish readers. Amazingly, Herbert's lyrical persona, Mr. Cogito—initially just a figure of a troubled modern intellectual—has recently become a model for the spiritual situation of a contemporary Pole: an individual who exists (in a given sociopolitical reality) and therefore, to reverse Descartes, has to think, to make a self-

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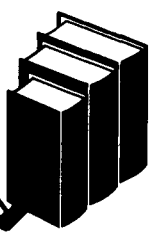

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defending use of his or her conscience or its aesthetic equivalent, taste.

Is there any hope in this kind of defense? Not necessarily. Another of Herbert's features, without which his image as a poet would be distorted, is that he promises nothing. The conclusion of "The Power of Taste" is sober and bitter:

> Yes taste
> that commands us to get out to make a
> wry face draw out a sneer
> even if for this the precious capital of the
> body the head
> must fall

In other words, the defeat is more probable than the victory. If any notion of hope appears in Herbert's poetry, it is hope without guarantee. No philosophy, no religion, no ideology is going to assure us paradise on earth. The only thing we can count on is that, as one earlier poem put it, by not bowing to sheer force, by "maintaining an upright attitude," we will at least avoid "suffocation in sleep." Or, in the words of "Report from the Besieged City":

> . . . if the City falls but a single man
> escapes
> he will carry the City within himself on
> the roads of exile
> he will be the City.

Whoever wishes to understand the spirit within the walls of the embattled fortress of today's Central European culture may well begin with memorizing these sentences.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK

Stanislaw Baranczak is the author of a study of Zbigniew Herbert's poetry, published in Polish last year. He is now preparing an English version.

A professor's path to TV stardom.

THE SCHOLAR AND THE SOAP

BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

EIGHT years ago, when others had begun to jog, to correct their corrupt diets, to engage—it was rumored—in affairs of various sorts, I had a different response to creeping middle age. A spry 44, I was well settled as a creature of routine—teaching literature classes at the same hours each term, usually in the morning; always finishing essays and reviews before, rather than after, they were due; eating interesting mixtures of canned soups, plus a ham sandwich with mayonnaise for lunch; making a habit of gin and vermouth before dinner; taking a half-hour nap each day, and so forth. A suitable addition to this routine, I felt, might be the cultivation of a less sublime literary form than I held forth about in my classes, so I decided to find a soap opera to watch, preferably one occurring in the middle of the day while I was eating the ham sandwich, and preferably of the half-hour rather than full-hour brand. It was thus I settled on CBS's venerable "Search for Tomorrow."

This show (hereafter referred to as "Search") had been running since 1951 and became the oldest living soap when its competitor, "Love of Life," fell by the wayside. It boasted an actress, Mary Stuart (she plays the heroine, Joanne, and has had many different last names as men have come and gone), who had graced "Search" since its inception. It concerned itself mainly with the small-town scene: hospitals, marriage and divorce, gossip and rumor, worry, worry, worry. As in every good soap, financial ruin or incipient brain tumors were on the horizon for every member of the cast. Yet somehow the contemplation of these and many other daily disasters makes us, the viewers, feel good. A sonnet by David Slavitt concisely accounts, I think, for this paradox; it ends this way:

> Stupid, I used to think, and partly still
> do, deploring the style, the mawkishness.
> And yet, I watch. I cannot get my fill
> of lives as dumb as mine: Pine Valley's
> mess
> is comforting. I need not wish them ill.
> I watch, and I delight in their distress.

As the years went by, I would from time to time compile lists of characters, all the ones I could remember, present and past. More often than not at the family supper table I would recount, to a not always enraptured wife and children, the depredations that had occurred earlier in the day. My third son began to watch it with me, during vacations and other times off from school, and if, occasionally, I had to be out of town for a few days, he would be waiting at my return, ready to read off his notes on those productions I'd missed. And even though "Search" didn't do much in the ratings and had nowhere near the popularity of such shows as "General Hospital" or "All My Children," it managed just barely to survive. At one point, in the spring of 1982, it moved from CBS to NBC and for a time occupied a slot at 2:30 in the afternoon. This ordinarily would have been an awkward time for me to view it; luckily I was on sabbatical, so I adjusted my schedule, came home later to lunch, and arrived back at the office at the relaxed hour of 3 p.m.

THEN one Thursday afternoon last April, just before the beginning of "Search," a local broadcaster on WWLP, the NBC affiliate in Springfield, Massachusetts, announced that beginning the following Monday her talk show would be switched to 12:30 p.m. (the "Search" slot). It took a moment to penetrate, before I began frantically scanning next week's *TV Guide* and, indeed, saw no listing for "Search" on WWLP. The Boston NBC channel had already disdained to carry it; two other stations that still broadcast it could not, to my knowledge, be received on my tube. I watched the show that day and the next, thoroughly distracted by the thought that this might very possibly be the end of the line for me and "Search."

The next morning I fired off letters: one to the station manager, deploring the decision to cancel and urging a reconsideration; one to the college newspaper, asking students to write and protest; a final one to the *Hampshire Gazette*, where my wife was employed. The station manager responded immediately, informing me that "Search" had been, in his words, "fledgling for a

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William H. Pritchard is the author most recently of *Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered* (Oxford).

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long time on the network" and adding, self-righteously, that NBC itself had been thinking of discontinuing it. I wrote back to point out that I understood a fledgling to be a baby bird just learning to use its wings, and that "Search" had been flying for more than 30 years until (I concluded dramatically) "you shot it down." But clearly I was wasting my words—no reconsideration was in the offing.

Meanwhile my wife had mentioned my loss to a reporter at the *Gazette*, who called up for an interview, then ran a clever piece about the distraught professor who didn't know what to do with himself in the middle of the day, having been deprived of his pleasure. Suddenly, the next morning, things began to move. The wire services had picked up the local story and phone calls began. One came from the offending affiliate in Springfield, wanting to do an interview, another from CBS in Hartford, which showed up with the cameras and was to stick with the story through its life. The exciting question seemed to be, as *USA Today* put it, why this "mild-mannered professor" was also an "addict." "And just why should this English scholar, who teaches poetry, fiction, and criticism, be a 'Search' junkie?" they asked, barely staying for an answer.

My mail improved mightily, both at home and in the office. Most of the letters were from women in the western Massachusetts area who commiserated with me, or wanted me to know how outraged they were and that they had written the station manager. And as the wire services beamed the story to various farther-flung localities, letters arrived from California and Washington (state), Bethany, Pennsylvania, and Gadsden, Alabama, Route 2, Box 61, where a Mrs. Arlene Gregg had an interesting proposal. She would tape two weeks' worth of shows, and send them along to me for viewing. Then I would send the tape back to her, at which point she would have a further two-week batch ready for me. I wrote Mrs. Gregg that I would be happy to receive the first two weeks' worth.

The plot thickened a couple of days later when a call came from someone at NBC, inviting me to fly down to New York City, meet the cast of "Search," and in fact play a bit part on that day's show. Let me think this over, I said, and call you back. Five minutes later I called back to accept, asking only that my wife be permitted to accompany me. (Her reportorial skills would be invaluable; she would remain cool and perceptive while I became flushed and excited.) Accordingly we were put up for the night at an East Side hotel, the Berkshire (I could have dinner *free* in the dining room if I wished), and called for by an NBC publicity person early the next morning.

At the studio it was all bewildering, fast moves from one person to the next, and the sudden disconcerting appearance of tube idols in less than heroic identities. For example, I didn't recognize that female having her hair put up in curlers across the makeup room. Introduced to me, she chirped out a "Hi, William, welcome to the show." It took some time before I registered that the figure being worked over was Marcia McCabe, or more significantly, "Sunny Adamson," tireless investigative reporter fresh from subduing a rapist intent on working his will on her and others. And there was the star herself, the venerable Mary Stuart, who was not in the taping that day but who had come over to the studio at lunchtime to say hello and, as it turned out, share some of my Zabar's corned-beef sandwich.

It was time for the rehearsals of different scenes—a hospital bed, a cabin where the kidnapped teenager was tied to a post and trying to escape, another cabin where pregnant Suzi Wyatt suddenly went into premature labor, and, for me most salient, Bigelow's Bar, where my brief moment would come to fulfillment. I was to precede one of the regulars into "Big's" and for a few seconds, until they moved the cameras to her and forgot me forever, it was

Astronomy Lesson

The two boys lean out on the railing
of the front porch, looking up.
Behind them they can hear their mother
in one room watching Name That Tune,
their father in another watching
a Walter Cronkite Special, the TVs
turned up high and higher till they
each can't hear the other's show.
The older boy is saying that no matter
how many stars you counted there were
always more stars beyond them
and beyond the stars black space
going on forever in all directions,
so that even if you flew up
millions and millions of years
you'd be no closer to the end
of it than they were now
here on the porch on Tuesday night
in the middle of summer.
The younger boy can think somehow
only of his mother's closet,
how he likes to crawl in back
behind the heavy drapery
of shirts, nightgowns and dresses,
into the sheer black where
no matter how close he holds
his hand up to his face
there's no hand ever, no
face to hold it to.

A woman from another street
is calling to her stray cat or dog,
clapping and whistling it in,
and farther away deep in the city
sirens now and again
veer in and out of hearing.

The boys edge closer, shoulder
to shoulder now, sad Ptolemies,
the older looking up, the younger
as he thinks back straight ahead
into the black leaves of the maple
where the street lights flicker
like another watery skein of stars.
Name That Tune and Walter Cronkite
struggle like rough water
to rise above each other.
And the woman now comes walking
in a nightgown down the middle
of the street, clapping and
whistling, while the older boy
goes on about what light years
are, and solar winds, black holes,
and how the sun is cooling
and what will happen to
them all when it is cold.

Alan Shapiro

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all mine. No lines, merely an opening and closing of the saloon door, a couple of steps to the bar, a firm, friendly handshake with "Big" the bartender, and an indication that I needed a beer. And lo, there was the beer, a real one, which I proceeded to sip, while knocking back some real potato sticks. The heavy cameras quickly rolled away from me toward Sunny Adamson. While members of the cast fluffed their lines, cursed things out, or made jokes about the dialogue, my own take was boringly perfect. There was evidently no way my ten-second journey from door to bar could be improved.

MY EPISODE didn't appear on the air until about nine days later, and I spent some time figuring out how to arrange a viewing for myself of myself. We had talked about renting a motel room near Hartford, say, someplace where we could pick up the show, but then a number of people in the area called or wrote to tell me that I might be able to see it on my own set from a channel in New Britain, Connecticut. So I purchased an ancient, secondhand outdoor antenna and had it installed on the upstairs porch outside the bedroom. The day of my appearance, however, the reception was worse than average, and the viewing was further complicated by the presence of the faithful Hartford TV crew come to film the professor watching himself.

"Prof lathers in the soaps" ran the lead to the AP account in a Rochester newspaper someone sent along. At about that same time I received my first crank call, from a strange, unidentified voice who said he'd been an "activist" all his life (evidently thinking, because of the letter I'd written to the station, that I too was an activist). He was inviting me to address a "Sexual Liberty meeting" that he was organizing for the Fourth of July. I was to put what he called my "Shakespearean mind" to work and give a speech on, oh, perhaps a nuclear freeze, or some topic related to sexual freedom. I quickly declined. More letters poured in, and radio talk-show hosts from Canada to Delaware issued me invitations to join them on the air. (I finally turned down one station that wanted me to arise for a 6:20 a.m. interview.)

Within the space of two weeks I had gone from a private man who cultivated his habit for half an hour a day, five days a week, to someone to whom such gratification was first denied, then to whom unexpected gratifications came in a flurry. Robert Frost liked to muse about his own career that, as with a wedding, "it begins in felicity and ends in publicity." And then, thinking of marriages that go wrong, Frost would add, "And maybe really *ends* there." But my own bit of publicity was felicitous because I knew it would end, fickle creatures that the media have proved themselves to be. So I was eager to squeeze whatever further experiences I could out of the whole affair.

It turned out that I didn't have to do much squeezing, since about a week after the first New York venture at the "Search" studio, courtesy of NBC, CBS called to suggest I might like to come down and occupy a spot on their "Morning News" program, presided over by Bill Kurtis and Diane Sawyer. My classes had just ended, and CBS's offer to pick me up and bring me back in a limousine was irresistible. (CBS puts up its guests at the Essex House, Central Park South, and my room contained a faulty shower and no telephone book.)

I WAS SLOTTED to appear at approximately 7:50 a.m., and as I arrived at the CBS studio the next morning Cyrus Vance and Strobe Talbott were being ushered out, having concluded their bit of chat about nuclear arms. In fact this was a big mixed-bag day on "CBS Morning News." The English romance novelist Barbara Cartland was to be interviewed (by Bill Kurtis) and so was the redoubtable Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan was supposed to precede your humble soap-watcher, who was to be the subject of Diane Sawyer's ministrations, but it was almost 7:30 and the minister had not arrived. While anxious phone calls were being made, suddenly in he swept, flanked by a retinue of well-suited (in a sort of Baptist undertaker-ish way) tie-clasped, highly groomed aides (disciples? bodyguards?). Farrakhan shook hands all round, including the professor's, though conversation did not flow freely between the two of us as we proceeded, in our makeup, to the studio.

Mr. Farrakhan's interview went on for quite a while, indeed was judged to be so important that he was let run overtime. As the clock moved toward 7:55, I began to wonder how I was to be gotten on and off in time for the news at eight. A legitimate wonder, for just as I

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was directed to occupy the throne, another order came through: "Professor, we're *terribly* sorry about this but there's no time to interview you before the news and (we're *really* sorry about this) there's no time during the second hour of the show either—everything is totally scheduled, filled up." I can still feel the pain. Diane Sawyer came over, sympathetically concerned, telling me how much she'd really wanted to do this story—but her sympathy was powerless against the inexorabilities of scheduling.

There was nothing for it, so it seemed, but to head back to Amherst, dragging my tail behind me. How to describe the mixture of feelings—wounded pride, annoyance at the silly waste of time, rage at CBS, at the intolerable Farrakhan, and at Kurtis for letting him go on, then a glimmer of ironic acceptance of the whole thing as somehow my just deserts ("You *will* move out of your accustomed sphere, will you!"). "Would you like to have your makeup removed?" asked my host for the morning, and I told her never mind, figuring I could wear it back to Amherst. A hasty good-bye and I was at curbside, hand out to open the door of the waiting limousine—when suddenly voices were calling to me to come back, come back, they had canceled some boring bit of consumer research in the next hour and were going to slot me in instead.

After such a victory, snatched from total defeat in the nick of time, the interview itself felt a bit anticlimactic. Diane Sawyer was friendly and enthusiastic, but must have thought she had a queer bird on her hands, this "professor" who watched a soap, and she asked me with a rather heavily underlined facetiousness whether I watched it for its "high literary value." I allowed as how she was teasing me, but then obligingly went on to suggest possible reasons why a literary person might be interested in a narrative that is all talk and that never concludes itself, unless forced to by a sponsor. Almost before it began, my moment was over, with Miss Sawyer—under her own steam or that of a clever assistant—concluding that, in the words of Yeats (which poet the professor taught), some people ate "a crazy salad." It was then time for me to depart, truly depart, and, I assumed, to conclude my career as a mild-mannered media event.

One last but very pleasant gasp came at the end of the summer when I received a call from a friend congratulating me on the restoration of "Search" to WWLP Springfield. "Restoration?" was my surprised response, but indeed it had been restored, without my eagle eye catching it in *TV Guide*. My loyal retinue regrouped: the wire services, two or three radio stations, and faithful CBS Hartford called for an interview, asking me—once more—how did I feel *now*? "Ecstatic," was about all I could muster. The station manager of NBC Springfield was quoted in the paper as wondering why, now that the program had been restored, he had heard nothing from me. I wrote him explaining that I thought it was no more than my due, and that usually I wrote such letters only to complain about something.

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Germany Today by Walter Laqueur (Little, Brown). A calm and close analysis of German anxieties. (Reviewed 9/2/85)

Letters, Summer 1926: Pasternak, Tsvetayeva, Rilke edited by Yevgeny Pasternak, Yelena Pasternak, and Konstatin M. Azadovsky (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). The curious correspondence of three poets. (9/2/85)

Brotherhood of Arms: General Dynamics and the Business of Defending America by Jacob Goodwin (Times Books). The rise and fall of one defense contractor. (Reviewed 8/12&19/85)

In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity by Daniel J. Kevles (Knopf). A history of excesses and a gallery of eccentrics. (8/5/85)

Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England by Louis Crompton (University of California Press). A revealing chapter in the history of intolerance. (7/1/85)

Lives of the Saints by Nancy Lemann (Knopf). Coming of age in a daze in New Orleans. (6/24/85)

The Call: An American Missionary in China by John Hersey (Knopf). An unsentimental saga of one Christian's half-century in China. (5/13/85)

Late Settings by James Merrill (Atheneum). A new, elegiac collection of lyrics. (8/5/85)

Her First American by Lore Segal (Knopf). A love story, melting-pot style. (8/5/85)

Reflections on Gender and Science by Evelyn Fox Keller (Yale University Press). How men have shaped the scientific method, and women might help reshape it. (7/15&22/85)

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

ask why there is so little political support for the reassertion of color blindness in national policy." Maybe the answer is that there never was any principle of color blindness for reassertion now. Back in 1896 Justice Harlan Sr. urged in *Plessey v. Ferguson* that our "Constitution is color-blind." The trouble was that Harlan got clobbered and the Supreme Court approved "separate but equal" right up until the *Brown* decision some 60 years later. It is only now, when color is used to remedy past discrimination, that people start to immortalize a principle that never was.

Centuries of discrimination have left minorities and women with unequal status and unequal opportunity—a fact that Mr. Rabkin is either unable or unwilling to acknowledge. A government that likes to think of itself as democratic and egalitarian can hardly limit itself to barring further discrimination and leave the existing inequalities it abetted untouched. Equal treatment of unequals is inherently unequal.

JOSEPH L. RAUH JR.
Washington, D.C.

CRITICAL APPROACH

To the editors:

In THE NEW REPUBLIC of July 29 ("Blaming America First"), as evidence of my presumed belief that democracy and liberty are "debilitating self-indulgences in the fight against the forces of evil in the world," TRB writes: "At a recent conservative conference, the philosopher Sidney Hook mourned 'about how fragile a self-governing democratic society is. . . . For its very own rationale encourages a constant critical approach that its enemies can exploit to weaken it.' "

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TRB stops short of quoting the sentence that immediately follows: "The moral here is *not* to abandon the critical approach—we could not do it without becoming like our enemies—but to employ it intelligently." TRB did not quote the sentence because it would have exposed the misplaced and lying irony of his account of what I and others said.

There is not a word in my paper or any other paper presented at the conference to which he refers that suggests in any way that democracy and liberty should be regarded as "debilitating self-indulgences in the fight against the forces of evil." What we should truly mourn is the lack of journalistic integrity in the columns of TRB, in which he so often impugns the integrity of others.

SIDNEY HOOK
South Wardsboro, Vermont

VIETCONG RETORT

To the editors:

Douglas Pike's review of Truong Nhu Tang's *A Vietcong Memoir* ("Opinions of an Opportunist," July 29) is one of those critiques that leave me wondering whether the reviewer and I have read the same book. In this case it's a stronger feeling, since I spent a year and a half helping Tang put his story into English.

Pike asserts that there isn't "a fact in this entire work that is revealed for the first time." That's a shocker. Among the war's events that have never before been described in print are the first organizational meeting of the National Liberation Front on December 19, 1960, and the funeral ceremony for the Vietcong in Saigon's Rex Dance Hall in 1975. Tang tells how the NLF's president, Nguyen Huu Tho, had to be abducted from his jailers so that he could join the Front, and he describes in detail how noncommunist Saigon intellectuals like himself began to link up with party operatives several years before the Front was formally organized. Also new are many of the details of the spy Pham Ngoc Thao's coup against General Nguyen Khanh and revelations about how the Front covertly manipulated at least part of Saigon's anti-regime opposition.

Part of this undoubtedly was known in outline by Pike and other close observers during the war. Nevertheless, we decided to orient this book to the general, educated public rather than to the specialists.

More disturbing is that Pike has read the book carelessly, sometimes missing whole sections. He has Tang asserting that the Vietcong Tet massacre of Hue civilians was spontaneous, not deliberate. In fact, Tang was in prison at Tet, and later, when PRG president Huynh Tan Phat told him the massacre had not been planned, his reaction was: "I did not find this explanation particularly satisfying." Pike states that Tang's " 'Ministry' [of Justice] appears to have consisted of two people, himself and a deputy," and that his title "conjures up a picture of a full-blown judicial system of courts, judges, police, and jails"—which of course did not exist. In fact, Tang describes exactly what the approximately 50 officials and 30 security guards did, and none of it involved courts, judges, police, or jails. Pike also says about Tang's transformation from a Frenchified, upper-class university student into a revolutionary that "he should have written about his conversion in more than a couple of sentences." In fact, Tang's description of perhaps the most significant event in his life takes all of chapters two, three, four, five, and part of chapter seven.

Pike's factual lapses seem due to his personal dislike for Tang and to his effort to portray him as an opportunist. I concluded on the contrary that Tang was not an opportunist but an idealist. His faults were those characteristic of idealism: he was overly trustful, slow to learn, and too easily led. But underneath there was no doubt about his passionate nationalism and his courage. Of the many embittered National Liberation Front leaders, only he had the guts to escape.

DAVID CHANOFF
Marlboro, Massachusetts

BACKHANDED VISA

To the editors:

As the U.S. consul who issued Martina Navratilova her last American visa in Prague in 1976, I am grateful to Josef Škvorecký for putting her story in its proper political context ("Czech at the Net," July 29). Ironically, if I had been aware of Martina's true intentions at the time I issued the (nonimmigrant) visa, I would have had to insist that she apply instead for an immigrant visa, thus considerably delaying her departure and alerting the Czechoslovak authorities to her forthcoming defection. It was a fruitful "mistake" on my part as well as by the Czechoslovak Tennis Federation.

JOHN M. EVANS
U.S. Mission to NATO

TRB, *from page 4*

fiscal stimulus. Meanwhile inflation, at four percent, is still as high as it was when Richard Nixon was panicked into imposing wage-price controls.

The second monetary moral is that when politicians enter the theological debate, their motives are suspect. They say that the Fed has failed to account for changes in "monetary velocity." Or they complain that the money supply has been too "volatile" or "erratic." The 1984 Republican platform accused the Fed of being "destabilizing." This is just code. What politicians—especially politicians in power—always want is looser money. That's because, as with any pleasure drug, the high comes right away and the hangover comes later. No politician ever has complained about "excess volatility" when the money supply was rocketing upward.

Traditionally the Democrats have been the party of loose money, while the Republicans emphasized a stable currency. Now the Republicans are tired of their nannyish role. Politicians of both parties have bills in Congress to "democratize" the Fed. One common provision would require prompt public reports of the Board's internal deliberations. Another would make Fed expenditures part of the normal congressional appropriation process. Supporters emphasize that these bills don't directly affect the Fed's independence from political control. But if they aren't designed to restrict its freedom of action, then they have no purpose. Complaints about "secrecy" and "elitism," like all other politicians' complaints about the Fed, are motivated by a desire to avoid monetary discipline.

The Fed's remarkable independence from democratic control is hard to defend in theory, but a blessing in practice. Inflation is the concrete expression of democracy's weaknesses. Not only is it too many dollars chasing too few goods; it's too many politicians chasing too few votes.

Playing the guy with the key to the liquor cabinet is no fun. Politicians may rail, but the sensible ones are secretly grateful that there's someone sober around to keep the party from getting out of hand. For six years this has been Paul Volcker, a lifetime public servant who could have been making millions on Wall Street instead. The Republican attacks on Volcker deserve some kind of grand prize for political ingratitude.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Qualms

IS IT REALLY unacceptable to have serious qualms about an immediate toppling of the white regime in South Africa in favor of rule by the black majority? It shouldn't be. But people who harbor such doubts—and I suspect that this group includes quite a few liberals who vocally oppose the current South African government—are largely unwilling to speak out for fear of being stigmatized as defenders of apartheid. Why the qualms? The reason isn't so much that a morally flawed but strategically located ally in the struggle with the Soviet Union might fall into neutralist or pro-Soviet hands, though that is a legitimate cause for alarm. The reason is simpler than that; it's recent experience. First, look at what's happened in Africa. I don't think it's racist to suggest that postcolonial Africa is not exactly an oasis of one-man, one-vote and other democratic values. Blame the vacating colonial powers for neglecting to plant the seeds of democracy, if you want. But the ugly truth is that black rule in Africa more often than not is dictatorial, cruel, and bloody. Even a supposedly benign autocrat like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania has turned his country into an economic basket case that no longer grows enough food to feed itself. Why would the situation in South Africa be radically different? Clearly the whites haven't been instilling the democratic ethic in the black majority there. How could they? They don't believe in it themselves. So judging by African precedents, prospects for South Africa are grim.

AND THEY ARE WORSE yet when you look outside Africa at the countries that had authoritarian regimes and were friendly to the United States. The hope was that some third force, neither right-wing nor communist, would emerge. Well, it hasn't worked out that way; democratic socialists rarely got off the ground. Instead, countries went from bad to worse. Are the people of China better off for having endured 30 years of Maoism? I don't think so. Has Fidel Castro brought more prosperity, freedom, and joy to Cuba? Far from it. Have the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos benefited from having corrupt, authoritarian governments replaced by communists? Hardly. What about Iran? Doesn't the shah's rule look progressive and humanitarian now compared to that of the ayatollah? For sure. Are Nicaraguans in better shape for having lost a Somoza and gained an Ortega? Not so you can tell. I know, I know. What occurred in these countries has no direct bearing on South Africa. Still, you can't help but have qualms.

WASHINGTON WILL BE a lot different without David Stockman, now of Wall Street, but not necessarily in the way you think. The most palpable change is likely to be a decline in newspaper stories quoting "a White House official." Stockman was the source of many, many stories on budget and tax policy. And some of these stories had "a White House official" on record with statements that were not quite White House policy. Understandably, this did not please some people at the White House, especially Richard Darman, now deputy treasury secretary. Darman, a deputy White House chief of staff in President Reagan's first term, was miffed because he was often blamed for these leaks. It's one thing to get zinged for your own leaks; catching hell for somebody else's is too much. So Darman complained at one point to a newspaper that ran many of these stories. You're misleading your readers, he said, because Stockman isn't really a White House official. He's a budget official. As you might guess, Darman got nowhere. Now Wall Street's gain is the Washington press corps's loss. But that is always the way it works with White Houses: the folks who give information to the press tend to be driven away. This happened in the Carter White House. By midterm, the four White House aides most comfortable talking to reporters—Peter Bourne, James Fallows, Greg Schneiders, Mark Siegel—were gone. With Stockman's departure, the last talker save one has left. Who's the holdout? Sorry, but it would be wrong to get a source in hot water.

WALTER MONDALE wasn't the only loser in the presidential election last year. The books about the wretched 1984 presidential race haven't been a terrific critical success either. *The New York Times Book Review* went so far as to suggest that *Newsweek*'s book *The Quest for the Presidency 1984* was poorly written and partly fabricated. Wrong on both counts, I think, but so it has gone with the campaign books. The problem is not the books themselves; it's the campaign. Landslides don't make for good reading. Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, two of America's best political columnists, did some remarkable reporting in *Wake Me When It's Over*, but who cares if Mondale cut more corners than we thought in funding his campaign? The *Newsweek* account has impressive behind-the-scenes anecdotage about the Reagan campaign, much of it from reporter Thomas DeFrank, but the campaign didn't turn on any of these back-room machinations. *Visions of America* by William A. Henry III is elegantly written, but it doesn't have a major point to make about the Reagan-Mondale clash. How could it? Was there something happening in the campaign, some rough beast slouching somewhere, that wasn't spotted in daily reporting last year? Nope. Even with Gary Hart rising and falling, the campaign was as prosaic as you can get. When a genial incumbent seeks reelection during a period of peace and prosperity, he's certain to win overwhelmingly. Reagan did, and it wasn't anything to write 500 pages about.

IN TRYING TO SCOTCH the idea of liberal bias in news coverage, defenders of the press rely on precisely the sort of argument they would reject if made by others. The argument, cited recently by both Al Hunt of *The Wall Street Journal* and columnist Joseph Kraft, goes like this: even if most journalists are liberal, their professionalism prevents this from influencing their stories. Now, what if a judicial nominee said he was a racist but that this wouldn't affect his view on civil rights cases? Or what if the chief of the Environmental Protection Agency declared that ownership of Union Carbide stock wouldn't influence his view of that firm's toxic waste practices? Or what if a White House official said his vacation at a company's resort wasn't a factor in pressing for tax relief aiding that company? Who'd buy such an argument? Not the press.

F.B.

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Don't miss
"Quest for the Killers"
a PBS special series starting Monday, September 9.
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Silent partners in world health

Recent triumphs in the field of tropical medicine will soon be celebrated in "Quest for the Killers," a documentary series to be aired nationally on PBS. One program will describe the fight against a worm infestation called schistosomiasis on the island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean.

Schistosomiasis affects as many as 200 million people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Puerto Rico and Latin America. It is often called "snail fever" because at one stage of their life cycle, *Schistosoma* worms infect snails that live on the bottom of rivers and streams. These parasites invade the skin of humans who drink, wash or swim in contaminated waters. They can cause severe itching, fever, diarrhea, and eventually irreversible damage to the liver. For 16 years, researchers visiting St. Lucia have been testing the practicality of various methods of control. Three approaches have proven to be most effective.

First, a public health team sprayed the rivers and streams of St. Lucia to get rid of infested snails. New plumbing facilities were constructed to assure a supply of uncontaminated water. Finally, treatment of people carrying the parasite was greatly facilitated by a drug developed and supplied by Pfizer. While previous treatments had to be given by injection, this drug was given orally only once, making it much simpler to reach a large number of people. The total control and elimination of the parasite is not yet a reality, but this combined medical and environmental program has done much to make life better for the people of the island.

Developing a drug such as this is a significant task that takes a decade or more and tens of millions of dollars. It generally involves the synthesis of hundreds of compounds in the organic chemistry laboratory. These compounds are then screened for antiparasitic activity. If one or more of them shows promise, the next step is to do toxicity studies and learn all about how the potential new drugs behave in laboratory animals. Only after completion of extensive, time-consuming animal studies can the drug be tested for safety and effectiveness in humans. And clinical trials in human patients can last for several years. If the clinical trials indicate that the drug should be made available, new technology must be developed to produce it on a mass basis, and in cases like this, with little if any profitability for the developer.

Drug research and development isn't always "good theater." And it's largely a team endeavor generally without charismatic heroes. The days of Paul Ehrlich and his "magic bullet" are long past. The work of the pharmaceutical industry isn't usually the stuff of TV documentaries. But the drugs depicted in the various episodes came from the laboratories of pharmaceutical companies all over the world. The pharmaceutical industry has been the silent partner of government agencies, physicians, nurses and their associates who achieved public health miracles in St. Lucia and other developing countries.

In the Third World, pharmaceuticals are perhaps even more important than in advanced industrial countries. Often they are the only form of advanced medical technology which is practicable. Other forms of care, such as surgery, are often too cumbersome and too demanding of scarce resources. Drugs, by comparison, are portable, relatively inexpensive and comparatively simple to use.

The vast majority of drugs for the Third World and also for developed countries originate in the pharmaceutical industry. The government agencies do not have the broad expertise or resources for drug development, and medical schools and universities have different missions. Only the major research/pharmaceutical companies have the necessary skills and resources. Most manufacturers of generic drugs lack the research capabilities to create new drugs and test them for safety and efficacy. And that's only one reason an economically viable research-based pharmaceutical industry is important to all of us.

Pfizer is pleased to have been a partner in helping to reduce the hazards of one of the world's more widespread health problems. Pfizer is also pleased to have had an opportunity to help make it possible to tell this story. Therefore, we hope you will find time to watch "Quest for the Killers."

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Stan Blossom, Sun Company district engineer, with his son, Tony, fishing near Hillhouse oil rig in the Santa Barbara Channel.

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